

Bridges of Honor:

honoring Alameda's teens and elders through
digital stories.



This project is supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

Everyone has a story to tell. To that end, this project was designed to be able to capture some of the stories of ordinary, everyday Alameda elders. Further, though, it was also designed to allow Alameda teens to learn, or hone, skills in digital videography and editing while gaining skill in interviewing, public speaking and cross-cultural interaction.

The Alameda Free Library is very pleased to have had wonderful partners for this project. Our thanks go out to everyone involved:

The Alameda Point Collaborative worked really hard to field a large team of teens as interviewers and were so enthusiastic that they made it part of another whole project of electronic skill building.

Our trainers, Mr. Dexter Moore (interviewing, cross-cultural relationship building) and Mr. Jeff M. Giordano (hardware use, videography, editing and compilation) were superb and really put their hearts into making sure that the teens learned as much as possible in the training sessions.

Thanks to each and every one of the fourteen elders who agreed to be interviewed for being flexible with scheduling (and rescheduling) and being willing to put yourself “out there” and tell your story. We learned a lot from you.

To the twelve teen participants, you rock! It wasn't easy meeting someone brand new and asking them about their lives. You handled it with poise, laughter and honesty. You can be proud of the work you've done.

Teens:

Dajah Peace
David Coyle
Herbert Lee
Izabella Rios
Jason Glover
Jayden Guerrero
Lizbeth Herrera
Madison Akins
Quina Caldwell
Seth Murphy
Teddy Oliver
Theo Wismar

Elders:

Ann Channin
Betty Sanderson
Beverly Buhnerkempe
Brenda Gardner
Cathy Dana
Christine Warren
Das Peabody
DJ Agnew
Mel Potters
Robert Blanchard
Steve Davis
Sue Yascolt
William Rowen

Contributing adults:

Carol Chamberlin
Cosette Ratliff
David Boxton
Haneefah Shuaibe
Jane Chisaki
Kevin Coleman
Keyana Davis-Strahan
Mari Perez-Ruiz
Parents & Caregivers
Perry Crew
Ramon Honea
Sara Christensen
Skye Weir-Matthews
Stephen DeFrank

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What follows are transcriptions of the actual interviews. You will note partial words and incomplete sentences. These are the speakers' style of speech. These are direct transcriptions, not edited versions.

Interviewer comments and questions are in **Bold** type.

ANN CHANNIN

Interviewed by Theo Wismar and David Coyle

So this is Ann, and I'm Theo, and we're just going to talk about how, about her experiences in Alameda. So when did you move to Alameda?

Well, first of all I don't live in Alameda anymore. I live in Oakland now. But I first moved to alameda in 1998 from San Francisco. And then last year, a year and a half ago, no 15 months ago i moved to where I am now.

When you first came to Alameda was it a lot different than it is today?

Well, not a heck of a lot different. It wasn't that long ago. But if you want to talk about things being different, I could talk about stuff like that. Have you seen Selma, or do you intend to?

I don't think, I'm

Not familiar with it? It's this movie that's just out. That Oprah Winfrey produced that's all about what happened in Selma, Alabama exactly 50 years ago. And I remember it real well. I saw it all on TV, but it was in black and white. And now they're doing this movie. You guys otta see it just because it's an important part of history.

It says here that you grew up in Philadelphia.

Philthydelphia PA, yes.

When did you move across, I mean, when did you come?

Fifty years ago I moved to San Francisco from Philadelphia. A little over 50 years ago, it was September 1964 actually.

Why'd you move?

Well, let me see. That's a good question. I had a husband who had come to San Francisco. You know, um, he was an artist and he was looking for a more creative atmosphere and I followed him out here.

It says that you were a jazz singer.

I am a jazz singer. When I was little I wanted to be a movie star and I'm only now, at my age, am I able to say that.

Do you still sing jazz today?

I still sing. I've been teaching voice for 40 years. And I sing and I perform and if there were a CD player I could, well I'll show you. I brought it to show, I figured this would be some show and tell.

I did this one CD.

When did you do the CD?

I think I completed it in 2005, but I worked on it a real long time. I started it in San Francisco and I finished it in Alameda.

Did you have a band that you sang with?

Well, you know, when you sing jazz or play jazz, you usually work with lots of different people and you get to meet different ones. And then if you have a paying gig, you call them up and say, "Hey I have this gig, come and play with me". So you do it like that. So from time to time I had a person or people that I worked with, mostly uh I didn't have that. And I also spent a lot of time just playing for myself. Not that I'm a great pianist, but that's the best way to go if you're not getting paid a lot of money.

(break in interview, technical issue)

So when did you move to Alameda?

1998, September of 98. I got evicted out of San Francisco. Because at that time there were all of the tech companies coming in and a lot of people were getting moved out of their apartments and a lot of people weren't able to pay for their apartments. And I could no longer afford to live in San Francisco so I came to Alameda and I have family here, so it all worked out.

Why did you end up leaving Alameda?

Well I'm an artist, I call myself an *artist*! And I just always was giving voice lessons and performing, I never really made a lot of money and my rent here was too high and I had very terrible neighbors that made noise all day and all night, so I had an opportunity to move into senior housing in Oakland and now I live

right off of Piedmont Avenue, a very nice neighborhood. Still close enough to here that I can come here as often as I want, I was here last night for the San Francisco Indie Movies that they had.

It says that you're a Jazz Singer; do you still do that today?

Oh yes, it can't stop me. Now-a-days I sing primarily in senior places, and I make a little money that way. Actually the library here should hire me to perform here. They actually had my son playing here and I understand the way that he got hired was that somebody heard his band on YouTube and got in touch with him but I'm not so into technology.

Are you still a vocal coach today?

Yes I am, I have been teaching for 40 years and momentarily I don't really have any students, but if anybody was still interested I would still teach.

When you lived in Philadelphia were you a Jazz singer there?

Well I was pretty young then. I don't know if you guys ever heard of Paul Whiteman but he was a band leader and he had a show called the Paul Whiteman TV Teen Club and I was on that show with, let's see I was one of four girls and then there were four boys and we all wore a sweater that had an emblem that said TV Teen Club and we sang, "Gee It's All Fine and Dandy, Sugar Candy When I'm With You" that was the theme song. So I guess you could say that was my first big thing, I was about 15 then.

It also says that you were to little kids; "Grannie Annie" is that true?

Oh, that's right, I'm Grannie Annie. So I moved into this very nice neighborhood in Oakland up on Piedmont Avenue but it's not the same somehow and I didn't feel like that I was having much creative fulfillment so I just started reading to toddlers, the ones that aren't in kindergarten or nursery school, every Thursday at ten-thirty they come to the book zoo and I read them kid's books. The fewer the words the better and I sing to them too. And actually I found a book right here in this very library several years ago when I had triplets that I was teaching, three little girls, three little sisters, that came to me for voice lessons and I said, "What am I gonna' do with them?" and I came here and I found this book called "Blue Moo" with a CD that had all these really fantastic songs for kids and they're great and you'd just enjoy the music no matter what age you are. So I used that with them and I use that now with the people that I'm reading to.

Do you call yourself the Grannie Annie?

Well, yeah, I started calling myself Grannie Annie some years ago and I am a grand-mom and a great grand-mom and at first I was calling myself Auntie Anne because there were some people that I knew that had a loss in their family and they just needed somebody, I felt. So I became Auntie Anne and then I graduated to Grannie Annie.

Do your kids and grand-kids live in Alameda?

Yeah, the little ones call me Grannie Annie but they understand that that is not really my name. And when I first had a great grandchild I thought, "Well I'm gonna' call her *Great* granddaughter Kylie and she's going to call me *Great* grandmother Anne" but that never happened, she didn't dig it I guess but now she calls me Grannie Annie.

Did you sing jazz in Alameda?

Yeah, I had a few little gigs here and there in Alameda. I sang at that nice senior place down by the water, they changed the name of it and I don't remember what it was, and I sang at some openings of some places that are no longer here anymore and some other places.

Who influenced you to become a jazz singer?

Well I guess when I was young, my husband was into jazz and I would listen to jazz with him and I gravitated towards it and I love Billy Holiday, she was a very famous singer who had a very sad life. We used to see her quite a lot around Philadelphia and I once shook her hand and I was real happy about that. Anything else you got here?

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Oh, I don't know. I showed you this picture, or I'll show it to you, (speaking about photo) that was my first piano and that's my mom and dad, he kind of looks like how Frank Sinatra looked. Do you know who Frank Sinatra is?

Yes.

Okay, so let me see and did I show you this? I have this CD that I did and I did a bunch of songs all the way from the twenties to the seventies. Now are you ready for something a little bit on the controversial side? About five years I was asked to take part in a photo shoot about people who use medical cannabis and she actually got this whole show together and I was one of the people in the show and it turned out that my photos were just very, very popular and so I brought some with me today. (Meaning pictures of herself) So this is one of the pictures she took and this picture has been seen all over the world and has been in many magazines and it was in the Russian Esquire so I saw this picture of myself in the Russian Esquire, but I couldn't understand what it said. (Meaning a different picture) And then this is another one that was also in the show that she did and this was actually in a show at the city hall of San Francisco and the show was called Medicine and it was all of these different people, and I just brought a few of the magazines. So I just want to start with this one because this is the most recent one, Chris Rock was on the cover of New York Magazine and someday he'll meet me, or I don't know if he'll meet me, but if he ever does he'll say, "Where do I know you from?" and I'll say, "Page forty-four of New York Magazine" (After off topic dialogue) Okay now here is one with Bill Clinton on the cover and these were some of the other pictures of other people that were in the Medicine show. (Pointing to her picture) Here I am down in the corner. (Referring to previous picture) It looks like the same picture.

Yeah, it's the same picture. So until this came out, just in December, I didn't even realize; she took lots and lots of pictures in the course of an afternoon, but I only knew the two pictures. (Flipping through pages looking for herself) And then this one says, "Should Grandma smoke pot?" So what do you think about all of that?

I don't know.

Any questions?

Well you talk about how you always wanted to write a book about your life, what would you put in that?

Well that's a good question; well I've always felt like I've been a square peg in a round hole, or vice-versa, you know like always working for myself and not working out in the world at a regular job, though I did do that way back when. And then I had an inter-racial marriage way back when those things were very uncommon and I got a lot of hassle from people in general, from the police; I can really relate to what's going on now-a-days. I could tell you stories but I guess really have to go into lots of details. Unless you want to ask me any questions. My mom always thought that I should have written it, about my life and I've had a kind of interesting life and I'm still living my life. Don't you want to ask me about what it's like to be old?

Do you have any lessons for the younger generation?

Oh, sure. I believe that we're all divine and we're all part of god and god would be incomplete if it wasn't for all of us and I believe in happiness and helping people, I think it's real important to help other people because it gives your life meaning and it makes you feel better.

Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?

Well I have children; I had two sons one passed away from AIDS the other one lives here and he's now, well he's going to be fifty now but he has a young wife. Well first of all he has a twenty-five year old daughter I should start with her, one of his earlier marriages, and she has two little kids and he has two little kids that are younger than his eldest daughter's, so it's kind of unusual. So I have a two and half year old granddaughter who's named after my mom and a seven month old grandson that is named after his father and then I have a five year old great-granddaughter she was the first baby and I just adore her because she's at an age where it's just real fun to interact with her and she says interesting stuff and then she has a cute little brother who's just seven months old and what really gives me a lot of joy is to see the interaction with each set of kids, how they love each other, how the brothers and sister are so bonded and that's nice.

Would you recommend that anyone become a jazz singer?

Not anyone, first of all you have to really want to sing, this is what I tell people if you want to learn how to sing; you probably can and then you figure out what kind of songs appeal to you or if you have a teacher like me and I get to know you and I get to know your voice I probably think of songs to inspire you and maybe show you some things that you've never heard of and ,you know, grow on you and you might decide that you like music that you would of otherwise never known. So it's a process I think.

Is there anything else you want to say?

I could go on and on. Well I guess not, unless you guys have any questions. Do any of the adults have any of the questions?

(Another person in the room asking a question) What's your favorite city; New York, Philadelphia or Alameda?

Oh golly gosh. First of all we can definitely knock off Philadelphia, because I call it "Philthydelphia" because the politics and the place, not that there aren't things I like about it. I grew up by the steps where Sylvester Stallone runs up, you know, and I used to hang out there a lot on those steps and I took art lessons in the, that Art Museum. So Philadelphia was good for that. New York of course is a great city. I love San Francisco and I met world travelers and they said, "If you have to be stuck anywhere, San Francisco is a great place to be stuck." Then Alameda, of course it's a beautiful town, I love being by the water and I love walking all over Alameda and while I lived here I had friends that I liked to walk with on a regular basis and we would go all around and outside Alameda, and I like where I am now I'm right off of Piedmont Avenue in Oakland and there's lots of nice restaurants there and nice people.

Who is your favorite now?

Who is current? Well that's a hard question. I like the lady that's playing Billy Holiday, why does her name escape me, see that's one of the things that happens when you're older and I can't think of her name and that's terrible. She's won all kinds of awards and she can sing opera, she can sing jazz and at three o'clock in the morning I will wake up and go, "Oh!" and it'll be too late because I can't think of her name right now. So I would say her and I would say me, I would say me I'm one of my favorite musicians even though lots of people can play lots better than me and I like my singing and I like to express myself.

(Another person in the room) I don't know if you know this about these two, but they are in the jazz band.

Oh! Tell me about being in the jazz band, what do you play?

(Interviewer speaking about other interviewer) Well I play guitar and David also plays guitar. Bass.

And what kind of music are you playing?

Jazz.

Oh, would you like to work with a jazz singer, I could teach you lots of stuff.

(another person in the room) Tell her some of the songs you guys are playing.

We're playing "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart".

(singing) I let a song go out of my heart. (laughter) Not warmed up, but. What else?

We're playing "Brazil"

Oh that's beautiful.

We're also doing "Cantaloupe Island"

Oh yes. Herbie Hancock. I don't know if there's any words to that but I sued to work with a little group that played that a lot. What else?

"Georgia On My Mind."

Oh sure, Georgia.

What else were we playing again?

We played a variant of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear".

Oh yeah, I can just hear that in parts. Kind of a jazz thing, huh. All right, so you want to ask me anything?

I think that's,

You think that's it?

Do you want to say anything else?

Oh, as I say, I could go on and on.

(other person in the room) I just have a quick question. Sorry guys.

Sure.

You said you ended up coming out here because your husband was out here. So, I guess my question is, that was a big choice and how do you feel about that choice and how has it affected your life?

Oh sometimes I think back and I think gee, if I hadn't come here my life would have taken a whole different turn. I wouldn't have the children that I have, you know. I wouldn't have all these people that I just talked about. I'd have different people probably, you know. And who knows what else would have happened different. But I'm certainly glad I came. I mean I think the Bay Area's a fabulous place to be.

Now are you gonna, who edits this?

We will, um. I don't know when, but we will.

There's also a little video of me on YouTube. And while these pictures, the day that these pictures were being taken. I was also, just similar to this, I was interviewed. The way they did it though, and I didn't catch onto it right away, this could be a little tip for you, like when you interview people. You don't want it to be just a back and forth, you kind of want to interject and your part, is your voice going to be in this?

Yes.

Yeah, but see, so there's a way of doing it where you would ask me a question and I would go on and answer the question, but it would be just me talking, you know. So they were doing that, but I didn't catch it right away. I kind of got off the beaten track here. But the video they did, they handed it over to a guy named Michael Leslie. So if you go to YouTube/MichaelLeslie.com, you'll come to a place where there'll be a bunch of Michael Leslie's. You have to pick the photographer and there's a thing called "Marijuana". If you hit on that, then there's a two and a half minute video of me where they slow it down and I'm going like this (demonstrates with her voice). You know, all little special effects. I actually had nothing whatsoever to do with it, they just made it and. So you might want to watch it so you can see how they do stuff like that.

Cool.

Tape ends.

BETTY SANDERSON

Interviewed by Theo Wismar and David Coyle

What was Alameda like when you first moved here?

Well it was quite different, we didn't have the South Shore and as a child we had a lot of freedom. Of course it was during the Great Depression, but we would go down to the end of any street and swim in the bay and we really had a lot of freedom to roam around and do things and we never felt threatened by anything and that's when we were younger. As an older student and all we would all walk to the library, one or two of us at night, and do homework and it didn't bother our parents at all; they felt perfectly safe with it. While I don't think many parents now-a-days do. And the schools were different. I went to Haight School all the way from kindergarten through eighth grade, it went till eighth grade, and in the play yard the boys had their side and the girls had their side and you didn't go over that line. We were really separated, but I don't know what else to tell you, other than it was a very friendly, comfortable place to be raised.

Did you have cars or did you walk around?

My father did not believe in cars, believe it or not he did not believe in cars, so he never bought one. So we walked and my father was a true walker. We even walked all the way through Golden Gate Park, on occasions. We bought a friend once and she said it was the worst day of her life, she was so tired, but we were used to it.

When you for AUSD did you work at a school?

I worked for Alameda Schools, I worked for the Special Education Department as a Secretary and we had our offices in the old Alameda High Building.

So you worked for all, not just one?

Well yes, it involved the children with Special Needs who were brought to our attention and we had a psychologist, also the Hearing and Speech teachers, the nurses and the Hooky Cops.

How long did you work there?

I worked for them for seventeen years.

What happened after that, did you decide to have a different job?

I retired. And when I retired I did quite a bit of traveling, but we were always happy to come back home. We probably went to nineteen different countries, in our travels.

So that means you were working on the Naval Base before that?

I worked at the Naval Air Station right out of High School, I was seventeen years old, and I worked there for two and a half years and I got married and stayed home. In those years you usually would, but now you usually don't. And then I went back when I was in my early forties and worked for them for five years until the opening with the school district came up.

What did you do for the Navy, were you a secretary?

Yes, actually it sounds ridiculous, but I was a confidential secretary when I was seventeen and the FBI even had to question the neighbors to see about my background. But of course I didn't know what, I would bring the confidential messages to the different hangars and ride a bike, so they liked to have young people who could ride bikes. And it was a fun job. I had to do my own filing and delivering and dispose of it.

So you were moving secrets around, were they clues?

They were all confidential, it's all in code. I had no idea what they were saying.

When you learned to ride a bike, did you learn when you were younger or for the job?

Well I first started riding my friend's bikes, they were boys; our two neighbors, and I had three older sisters that never had a bike. My parents didn't think I should have a bike, but my mother changed her mind said it was more dangerous for me to ride a boy's bike than a girl's bike, so my father bought a second hand bike and painted it. And it was probably the best present I've ever had in my life.

Did you play with the neighbor kids all throughout your life?

Yes, we had a great neighborhood and some of them are still friends. I'm almost ninety and I have friends that are in their nineties that I've known since I was a child.

Did you play with your siblings or were they a lot older?

No, they weren't that much older than me; we were all pretty much within three or four years of each other. But unfortunately a lot of them aren't with me anymore.

I'm sorry. Did they go to the same schools as you?

Oh yes, I had three older sisters and they went to schools in Berkeley; they lived in Berkeley before they moved here. But they also went to Haight School and went to Alameda High. And my husband also graduated from Alameda High.

Do you remember Neptune Beach?

I sure do, and our next door neighbor in our last house was the son of the man that built Neptune Beach; his name was Bob Strelend and he told the story. They were farmers, but his father had a job building fairs and you're probably too young to know about it, but they had the Chicago Fair and he helped build the buildings for that and then they had the Pan-Am Fair in San Francisco and he worked on that. And he went back to the farm and he told his family, "I've found the place I'm going to build my permanent fair." And it was Neptune Beach and he did do it.

Did you go there a lot when you were little?

Quite a bit, we didn't have a lot of money but the stores would give you coupons; if you spend so much money they'll give you coupons and you could go there. So we went and my sisters had older friends that worked on the rides so we often got on the rides without paying, which helped. It was a wonderful place. But it dwindled during the Depression, with the money and all; they just couldn't keep it going. But it was a real history of Alameda.

Do you remember what your favorite rides were?

Oh I liked the, the Whoopy (?), or I should say the roller coaster and they had the biggest roller coaster in the country at one time, it went out into the bay but you had to be an adult to go on it; but you had to be an adult to go so I never got on it. But I liked that most. One thing that might interest you, going to Encinal High, all those years ago that was all farms or sand and just a few homes and when I was in school the China Clipper was the first airplane to take off that flew to Hawaii, well non-stop; the first one to fly from our continent to Hawaii. So they let all of the school children out and we had these red trains, they called them, that went down Encinal Avenue and Lincoln Avenue and then we all stood and watched it take off, and that a big, big day.

Did you use the trains to get around Alameda a lot?

Yes, and I lived on Lincoln Avenue and I'll tell you that red train would go by and our whole house would shake; but we were so used to it so we didn't think much about it but it would shake and made noise.

Were the trains free or did you have to pay?

Oh yes, you had to pay to go on it and it brought you down to what was called the Mole; it was really a dock, where the fairies came and it brought you to the fairies because Alameda was known as San Francisco's bedroom, almost everybody here worked in San Francisco.

Do you remember during World War Two when the base kind of picked up, do you remember how that changed Alameda?

The day after Pearl Harbor was bombed, they had an assembly at Alameda High and they broadcasted President Roosevelt's Speech and when he declared war, I was a senior at the time, and a lot of the young men just got up and went right down and enlisted; a lot of them were refused because they were too young but I'll never forget that day. And the day before when Pearl Harbor was bombed I was playing tennis with friends in Franklin Park and one of our friends came and said, "The Japanese bombed pearl harbor!" And we said, "Where's that?" we had no idea where Pearl Harbor was, so that's a very, very vivid.

How soon after that did the naval base start to get bigger?

Oh it opened in nineteen-forty, it opened actually before the war. And the navy paid all of five dollars and there was a banker in town called Mr. Mulvaney and there's a picture of them giving him a five dollar check. But he encouraged it because of the jobs it created and the business for the city.

Did a lot of your friends work at the navy base with you?

Oh a lot of them, a great deal of them even. People were hungry for jobs anyway, and I had two older sisters that also worked for the navy.

Did they do the same jobs as you?

Secretarial, one of my sisters quit and joined the WACS which was the Woman's Army Corp, but the other sisters stayed with them.

Is there anything else you'd like to talk about for Alameda?

I don't know, I will be as you're doing this through the library, I have to tell you as a child in the old library we had that brown house, that was the child's library and it was my home away from home; I loved to read and I was there all the time during the summer they would give you, funny kind of award, for every book you read you would get an Indian feather and I had more feathers than anyone in town, so that was very fun; I loved that library.

How else has the library changed?

I don't know, the original library was funded by Andrew Carnegie, and he funded libraries all over the world. But I had a family of four children and all of my children went through all of Alameda Schools and I have one grand-daughter that graduated from Alameda High, so we go back a little ways.

Where do they all live?

I only have one son and his wife and my grandson that live here. The others all live away.

Is your grandson in the same schools?

Well my grandson that lives here graduated from UC Davis and he's doing grad work at CAL, right now.

What was your favorite time to live in Alameda?

I don't know, I think it's all been good really; of course I have the fond memories like you will too. You think about when you were younger. But my adult life here has been very, very nice here too. I had a very nice marriage and four great kids, so what more could you ask for me? Not much.

Is there anything we haven't talked about yet, that you would like to say?

I don't think so, but it sure is nice to have two nice looking young men like you here. It really is, I appreciate you coming.

Thanks for being interviewed.

BEVERLY BUHNERKEMPE

Interviewed by Quina Caldwell and Herbert Lee

When and where were you born?

I was born in July of nineteen-thirty-three in Illinois.

Where did you grow up, if different?

I spent the first four years of my life in a very small town in Illinois and then because of the work situation and the depression my father came out to California and about a year later he sent for my family. And we arrived in Alameda in nine-thirty-seven.

What was your occupation?

Well I worked before I got married as a secretary and after I was married I didn't work for a number of years and when my children were teenagers I worked as a bookkeeper for the Alameda Girls Club, before they changed their name. And then I went to a full time position in San Francisco as the Senior Assistant Controller, which is like an accountant, of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and that's the job I retired from.

Why do you want to share your story?

Well I didn't think about it, I believe it was my brother that urged me to come in; he'd been interviewed, so I don't know why. Why are you looking for stories?

What were your favorite hobbies?

I was more physical then sitting around and doing things, I liked to be active; I liked to roller skate and ice skate and ride my bicycle. And when I went to Alameda High School after starting at the old school down at the west end, which was then replaced, and then I went to Haight School for eight years and then I went to Alameda High School and I got into a special PE class where the girls could earn their block letters and that was pretty active; so I liked to move around a lot and in my later life I found that I really didn't like being chained to a desk and I'd like a job and I made it very clear when I was interviewed that I wanted to be able to move around, if I needed something I could get up and go get up it and I didn't have to ask for permission and I was fortunate to get jobs where I could do that.

Do you have any favorite sports?

Ice skating was always one of my favorite sport, I can't do it now because my legs don't work, and I also liked to swim; I swam miles until four or five years ago, when I couldn't get my legs to behave and I liked to walk a lot. I jogged over the San Francisco Bay Bridge, two times, and from there we had to jog all the way to Golden Gate Park; and so I enjoyed those and I always liked to have the wind in my face and I liked to ride my bicycle and my husband and I went on a seven-hundred mile bicycle trip up in the Sierra and had a good time.

What were your favorite subjects in school?

Oh, I always liked reading and spelling and history; math always gave me a problem, arithmetic as we called it in lower grades, and when I got into high school I didn't take the college required Algebra and Geometry, although I had a wonderful math teacher that said, "You could do it!" though I was never willing to give it a try. In those ages, probably even now, when you're a kid, a teenager you don't want to look stupid in front of anyone and you don't want to do anything that would embarrass, so I didn't want anyone to know how stupid I was.

What was it like in Alameda, back in the day?

Well in nineteen-thirty-seven we started out on Fourth Street, we lived in a big ole house across the street from Marion Court; which is still in existence. And I went to Longfellow School, that's the school I was trying to remember, and I went to kindergarten there and when we moved to Alameda; of course it was a few years before World War Two started, and it was nice, it was a nice place, you could get around on the bus very well; my mother didn't have a car and she got around on the bus very well. And I had I five siblings, I'm the youngest of six, there were four girls, my brother and myself. And they went to the old Washington School and then they moved on up to the Alameda High School and we all graduated from Alameda High School.

What was the question? Oh you wanted me to tell you what it was like in Alameda. I don't know, Alameda was a nice place to grow up; you could go all over Alameda and nobody'd bother you, when we moved later across the street from Haight School, I went to the old Haight School. And I remember one day, and we weren't very old, my brother was really an explorer, and adventurous; and he said in later years that he was gonna' go down and find my dad, my dad was a carpenter contractor and he was down on the west end where we used to live, and so my brother and I started walking from Lincoln and Willow all the way back to where we lived on Fourth Street and it was an adventure. And another time we went out walking and he wanted to go through the Tube, we only had one Tube; the Posey Tube at that time, and that's where I balked. I saw this big black hole with cars coming out of it and I refused to go and I'll have to admit my brother was an adventurer and someone saw us there and wanted to know what we were doing there and they took us home in their car.

When we were down on the west end we had the remnants of Neptune Beach, which was an amusement park; after the World's Fair went to Treasure Island it took a lot of customers away and eventually closed up, there was Neptune beach and there were a lot of other swimming pools there that we could go to. And there was one called Cottage Baths which was in existence even after I got out of high school and that's where we did our swimming and during World War Two we had soldiers quartered at the Veterans Building over on Central and there was a cannon or a machine gun up on the roof and there were other areas we couldn't even go to because they were restricted.

Alameda Naval Air Station had finally been completed and you couldn't go down there and we had blackouts, we'd get an air raid alarm and we'd have to black out our houses and anybody caught showing a light would be in trouble. And we had food rationing which meant my mom in order to feed a family of eight had to really show ingenuity in order to feed us all, and I remember my dad, we had a high basement home and my dad had this old bathtub; he always collected things from job sites and he had this old bathtub, that he filled up with sand in case there was a fire you could throw sand on the fire. And we had our food storage down there, any time there was a sale my mom would get a couple extra cans so we could have food.

And then later my father gave up his contracting business and went to work in one of the shipyards, I think it was Moor Shipyard; we had several up along the Oakland Estuary. And that's how a lot of people made their living and they took the ferry from San Francisco to Oakland and vice-versa, we had ferries running back and forth. And we the red-trains which were commuter trains and men, usually men, they'd ride down to what was called the MOLE and then they'd get on the ferry and get ferried over to San Francisco to their jobs, so riding the ferry was kind of fun; and now of course we have them back but they got put out of business by General Motors Buses which started going across the bridge. And so we had to put up with those.

Have you ever been around the naval base?

Well after the war we were able to get onto the *Naval Air Station* as a Captain of the Navy informed me, "It is *NOT* a base it is an Air Station." And I said, "Well I guess people call it the base because you're based there." and he said, "No, we are *stationed* here." He was very clear about that but we eventually we got to go, my sister married a Naval Aviator; they were never Pilots they were Aviators, and so when they came to town we could go and eat at the naval air station and she could shop at the commissaries.

So in later years when I realized that I really didn't like sitting at a desk I worked down there, on the station, and they built a skate park and I was very active in that, I really enjoyed doing that. I picked up tools, I set rebar, I cut rebar and did all kinds of stuff to help the kids build that park and later on when it was finally finished I got a complementary membership in the operating engineers because I even got to use a backhoe, I didn't use the backhoe I used the front loader. And did a lot of things I enjoyed doing; hammering and stuff like that, and later those same kids were the ones that tore down the old CPO (Chief Petty Officers) club and they remodeled it and we put in a child care center. How come I don't remember? Anyway, I spent a lot of time down there; really enjoyed doing it, and I remember one time I was going up a scaffold and this young man said, "Oh no, I'm not going up there." and I said, "Why not? I'm an old lady!" I said, "I'm going up there!" and I even went up on the, not the forklift. Why am I having trouble with these

names? It's a little four wheeled vehicle that has a scissor- a scissor lift (Mentioned by another interviewer in the room) and I operated that and got up there and helped, under instruction, to do a little wiring and I did some other things I don't think I could do now, but I cut metal; I got very good with the saw cutting metal and it was just wonderful.

The kids had worked out how they had wanted things done and we put in a nice daycare center down there and now they have moved to, it's Longfellow School I think they are. What is that called? I've done a lot of things and they get kind of mixed up. Anyway that was something I really enjoyed and volunteer work has always been something my family has done, my mother volunteered as soon as we got here in Alameda she was a member of the PTA and she was always volunteering and even when she was no longer a young woman, she was in seventies, and she was still volunteering for the PTA in the public health venue. And so she encouraged us to do that, especially my brother and me, we have done a lot in Alameda as far as volunteering is concerned and it's an interesting thing to do; and you learn a lot. I wouldn't have been able to handle tools if I hadn't volunteered for the skate park and the center. It's run by Alternatives in Action, what was the name of that.

So, back in the day; on the base, because I live on the base and I was just curious to know, there's a lot of abandoned, what were some of the buildings that aren't used anymore?

Well, I knew kids who were at the station. During the war what they had was, some schools had so many kids, called double sessions; some kids went in the morning and some kids went in the afternoon. But we were in the center of the town and we got kids from the naval air station, they were bused in, coming to Haight School they only needed a station wagon but they came to school and were able to get a full day of school, at Haight School. And we, as I said, weren't able to go there; they had a lot of enlisted men quarters where the men stayed when they got off the ships. Because we had a lot of navy air carriers, besides the Hornet, we had the Boxer. I looked out when I was out on the beach one day and I looked down toward the naval air station and there were five air craft carriers moored at the naval air station, and so we had a lot of activity down there during World War Two and even after.

My mother-in-law worked at what was called the Naval Rework Facility and what they did was rebuild plane engines and did repair on things, so that was a pretty active station. And so when the men were on land, they had their enlisted man's quarters, the officer's quarters, they had bachelor's quarters and the commissary was a store; that great big abandoned store down there across from Atlantic, that was a store where they could shop and get their groceries and their clothing. And they had a theatre; in fact they probably had two theaters because the enlisted men and the officers didn't attend the same theaters. Well there was just a lot of activity going on especially when you have a war going on; and of course later there was a Korean War so that kept the station busy and I don't know if they were so busy during the Vietnam War.

'90 something, I can't even remember the date, they closed the Naval Air Station down. And eventually it was given or given or passed over to the City of Alameda. And they're trying to get things going down there and see if they can generate businesses to come in there. 'Cause some of those hangars are huge, just really huge.

One thing, I don't know if you know it. Back in the day, I think it was 1936, before we got here. There was a man named Juan Tripp who wanted to start airline coverage from California to the Philippines and then to China. And he had some, he had an airline on the East Coast. And he came out and they build this huge sea plane, and they were called Clippers after the big sailing ship. He had the China Clipper and others. But the China Clipper took off from what is now the Station and uh, there was an airport there. The Alameda, uh, the Alameda airport or the San Francisco Aerodrome at one time. And it took off from Alameda and flew to Midway and Wake Island and then hopped across the Pacific. And those stops became important, because the Navy was able to use those stops, uh, take them over and use them for war time. And those Clippers were beautiful and only, of course, rich people could afford them. 'Cause they could sleep in them, and they ate in them and uh. I don't know if you've ever seen the movie "The Hindenburg", about the big blimp, the zeppelin?

Oh I don't think I've seen that one.

The airship. Well anyway, it shows the kind of high style the people had. You know they were served and all of that. But uh, they had hoped to really make a great transportation program out of it, but when the war started, let's see, it started in Alameda. Then in 1938-39 they had the World's Fair, as they called it, it was really an Exposition, and they based those sea Clippers at Treasure Island and that was going to be where we were gonna have a big airport. And then the war came along, the Navy took over Treasure Island. So that was the end of the China Clippers.

Although the Navy had smaller Clippers. The Mars (?) put out a seaplane for the military and my brother in law flew one of those as a, a, they were on watch so that the United States wouldn't get bombed by Germany. And then later on he went on to fly a B-24.

Uh, let's see, Alameda. Do you have any other questions? I pretty much need questions to get me going.

Ok, um. Let's see. I think we're pretty much done.

Well you know, during the war, the kids in the grammar schools you know, they were doing things to help us be patriotic. We used to have tin can drives, collect all the tin cans. Collect bacon grease 'cause that went into the making of bombs we were told. We had paper drives, took the money and supported things with that. In fact, I was in a class in which the teacher taught all of us to knit, including the boys. And we would knit squares to make afghans. We'd make the squares and one of the Red Cross ladies would sew them all together and make the afghans for the ambulances. And we had a big naval hospital in Oakland, can't even remember the name. They just tore it down. Anyway, it was a huge naval hospital. And I remember my mother taking my brother and I to visit an Illinois friend there who was wounded in the battle of Tarawa, which was one of the big island battles they had. Oak Knoll. Oak Knoll Hospital. Funny how you can't remember. Anyway the kids contributed to the war effort too. And that's how we kept busy.

(Other person in the room) I have a quick question. You mentioned the food rationing. Did you guys have a victory garden?

Uh, no, uh. I don't know why we didn't. We had a yard that we could have, big enough. But we kids had to go somewhere to play. And so that was, you know with eight, with six kids, although my two older sisters were out working then. But, uh, it was uh, we didn't have a victory garden.

Oh and another thing I left out about Alameda, and you might have heard about it before. We had the United States Maritime training station, and they trained officers for the Merchant Marine. And that was down at the foot of Webster and some of the buildings are still there. The foot of Webster, there's uh, that's one of the ways you can get to Crown Beach. You turn into that street by Fosters and you can get in there. That's where the Maritime service was. And my second sister Dorothy worked for them. And they were training these men to work in the Maritime service, and for some reason they had to wait tables, I don't know. But Dorothy was able to get us down to the maritime station on Friday nights and we would have dinner down there. We'd pay for it. Very reasonably priced and it was all done very elegantly. So that was fun. And we would go down there on certain days and they would have fun things for the kids to do. And um, but they had a huge swimming pool that had a high tower. And the men would have to go off that tower, sometimes, you know, dressed 'cause they didn't know when they were gonna be caught in a raid of some kind. Because the enemy always went after the merchant ships. They wanted to stop supplies for the war. So we had that here in Alameda as well. So. We took part in going down to that. So that's it unless you have specific questions.

So we're done then. Thank you.

BRENDA GARDNER

Interviewed by Quina Caldwell and Seth Murphy

Hello. Nice to meet you. What is your name?

Brenda Gardner.

When and where were you born?

I was born in Orange, in Orange County. That's in southern California in 1959.

Ok where did you grow up, if different?

I grew up in a small town called Ojai, California, and that's also in southern California. It's a very small town. And I spent at least 14 years of my life there.

So what is your occupation?

I'm a Special Ed. teacher in Piedmont, California.

Why do you want to share your story?

Well I just think that it's important for people to understand my generation and to understand that, you know that, when you get older it's, everybody's going to get older, and that, that and I like the whole idea of an intergenerational world where everybody can kind of live and work together.

Um, is there anything else we should know about you?

Um, um, let, I um, just enjoy life every day. I try to do something new every day and that makes life very interesting. Last week I went and decided that I wanted to be in a movie, so I decided to sign up to be an extra in a movie. So I actually got called to be an extra in a movie.

Cool

It's about Steve Jobs. But, um, but I was sick that day so I wasn't allowed to do it. But I'm still going to try to be in that, be an extra in a movie.

Very nice.

So what did you used to do in your childhood?

Well, um, you know, life was so different because we didn't have computers or anything like that. So what we did was, we did things that were fun like, we didn't stay inside at all. So what we did is we would have little races, we would play outside all day long. So we played a game called flashlight. We would stay up like, a couple, until late at night, and we would shine lights on each other to see which one we could catch the first. We were always running around outside. We had another game that we played, a couple other games that we played outside. So it was different than today because you guys have all these computers and games you play inside, where we would spend all out time outside and it was a whole different way of thinking.

So when you were in school, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher.

What were your favorite studies in college?

Uh, my favorite studies, Human Development. Do you know what that is? Human Development. I liked studying about different people, different age groups. That was my favorite thing to work with kids who didn't know about kids from the time they were born until the time they grew up and passed away. So I learned about all age groups and I'm very interested in that, different age groups.

Um, so what were your favorite things to do when you were a child?

When I was a child? Um I really liked to play tennis and um, when I was a little older. When I was little, we, in my childhood I didn't have a lot of money so we didn't really do a lot. You know, we weren't able to do things. We would do things like, take adventures and that meant walking around the neighborhood and there were a lot of mountains and rivers and streams so those were kind of our places to go for an adventure. We um, we like, we did things like, you know we got in trouble. A little, you know, because we didn't have a lot going on, so some times we got in trouble. But we just, um, we just liked to do things outdoors.

So what were the things that you sought when you went on your adventures?

We would, just wanted something new and exciting. So sometimes we would go into like a haunted house, what we thought was a haunted house. And we would look around, and we would joke around with each other. Because I had four brothers. And I was the only girl out of 5 kids and so there was a lot of joking around and scaring each other. We did a lot of that kind of thing. My brothers would come around to my room and knock on the door and knock on the window and then take a picture, a photograph of me and I'd be scared and they would hang them up in their room. So it was a lot of joking around and um, just funny, funny goofing around all of the time. We had, we would play, we had these dirt clod fights, because there was nothing else to do. And they would pull out weeds from the, the bottom, where there's a little dirt clod there and we would throw them at each other. Those are the kind of things we thought were fun to do. It doesn't sound like fun, but it was fun.

It sounds like fun to me.

And sometimes people would get hurt, but you know, it was just part of growing up, you know. A lot of times we would take long hikes. We liked to go on hikes and stuff around the mountains. There were a lot of mountains everywhere. And then I moved away, when I was a little older. When I was 16 I moved up here.

So, Ok um. Did you have any favorite sports when you were in school?

I played tennis, but I wasn't really that good at it. Um, I, we mostly did track and field back then. Baseball was the number one thing we liked to do. We liked to play softball and baseball.

So were there any other things you wanted to be when you grew up?

Um, I think at one point I wanted to be a journalist, because I thought that was exciting and interesting. And I actually read up a lot on becoming a journalist and I was on the school paper.

Do you have any pets?

I have two cats, Oscar and Felix.

Cool. What were your favorite hobbies, in general?

I really like, I like to do woodwork, but I really enjoy just hiking and bicycling and.

(unintelligible)

Sounds like you had a pretty fun childhood.

I enjoyed it yes.

So what did you see, like you were on the hikes?

Lots of animals. Where I grew up there were lots of tarantulas. And so we would see a lot of tarantulas. And um, I know. There was a hill called Tarantula Hill and we would climb up and we would find these tarantulas and, being curious, my brothers would go over and pick them up and try to throw them at me, us and stuff. And there were bobcats up in the hills.

Cool. Did you ever get chased or?

No. no I never was in danger. Not until I was older and I went to Mexico. And then I spent some time in Mexico and I got chased one time, by a wild boar. Yeah, that was scary.

Did you, wait, was your dad like a hunter?

No he was not. He was also a teacher. And he taught most of his life, but he didn't really enjoy it. So he wasn't a very good teacher, I would say. But he was kind of, very strict. He was a very strict teacher.

Was there a lot of lakes around where you used to live?

Yes there was a lake called Lake Casitas and it was, there were a lot. We would go fishing a lot of times. We spent a lot of time in nature, just a lot of time. So when I moved up here when I was 16 it was different because I went from living in nature to living in the city. And it was a whole new experience for me.

Did you guys used to farm?

No we didn't farm. We didn't farm, but we spent a lot of time in the country, swimming. You know, growing up, there were swimming holes there. We would jump into the swimming holes and it was things that you probably don't do too much in the city right? I mean, can you imagine swimming in a swimming hole? I've talked to some friends and they said, "I would never go in a swimming hole, it would, it would"

(unintelligible)

There, are there? That's interesting.

Um, I'm having to think here for a minute

So do you want to focus just on my childhood or any other time?

Any other time is fine.

Ok, cause when I moved up here I moved from that small town up here.

So how long have you been living here.

I've been living here for 35 years. So most of my life I've spent in Northern California. So I moved from there, in Ojai Valley, and I moved to Richmond, California. So I went from living in a small town to living in a city, Richmond. So it was a completely different time, you know, completely opposite. So when I moved up here it was more difficult because I wasn't used to the city life.

How was it like in the city life?

Well, where I grew up, it was mostly white people in that town. So when I moved up here there were different ethnic groups and different types of people and for the first time in my life I got to know different types of people so it, um, and it was kind of interesting you know.

So what year did you move to Sacramento?

I moved to actually, Richmond.

Oh, I mean Richmond.

I moved to Richmond in 1977, not probably '76 actually, 1976.

So, is there something good on the table?

Just something inappropriate.

I had the feeling.

So, yeah I was up here and um, you know, lived up here for quite a while and now I feel completely at home living here. This is my home. I love it.

So would you ever move back to Orange County?

I might move, I thought about moving back, but I just don't think that's me anymore. This is me. You know. At one point I thought about moving back, but it's, I've grown so much since then and I've learned so much since I've come out that I don't think I could ever move back. 'Cause it's a small town there's not a lot to do. You know, you can't go to San Francisco. The biggest city is Ventura which is still small. There's not a lot going on.

So, like, do you ever go swimming or like skiing?

Yeah, they had a mountain, it was called, um, Mammoth. And so they had snow up on Mammoth, but nothing like Tahoe here. And, as I said, my family didn't have a lot of money, so we couldn't afford to go skiing back then. But we did, I did take one trip up there with my family and we would ice skate. We only had enough money to ice skate, not downhill ski. Skiing was expensive.

So what was the weather like?

The weather there is really hot during the summer and really cold during the winter, it's desert kind of. It's in a valley so there's mountains on all sides. The name Ojai is actually an Indian name meaning the Nest. It's spelled o.j.a.i., but you pronounce it Ojai because it's an Indian name. And there's a lot of Indian burial grounds there, a lot of folklore surrounding the Indians, Native American Indians that have lived there.

Is there any reservoirs or reservations?

Not really. The last tribe that lived there, they were called the Chumash. That was a pretty big tribal group there and actually some of my friends were Chumash. They still held up the tradition and if you go back to that town you'll see that there are some Chumash Indians that still live there.

Cool. Have you heard of any Big Foot myths there?

That's an interesting question because there is a, um, folklore around that area and they called this man, they called him the Char-man, because this man got burnt when he was young. And he, they, they, the story the folklore in this town is that the Char-man goes around and um, and every time we'd see something or we didn't understand something we'd go "oh it must be Char-man". Because this man got burnt and the town story is that this guy wanders, wanders the area of the valley. So a lot of, kind of, ghost stories in my town. Because, I think, because not a lot of stuff happens so there's a lot of ghost stories and people have all these stories about ghosts and kind of funny.

Yeah, 'cause I was just wondering 'cause I was watching a TV show and it was saying how all these native American tribes around North America had the different types of names for the Big Foot and how they originated the story and the Big Foots origin. And stuff like that, so that's why I asked you the question.

Wow that would be interesting show to watch.

It's called Monster Quest.

Monster Quest. Wow that would be interesting. Yeah because they do have a lot of stories. There are Indian burial grounds there and then there are houses above the burial grounds and there are a lot of stories surrounding those. They think it might be an Indian tribe that haunts the area.

So like are they tunnels or?

It's just an area of land that they. I think there might be some laws against building on an Indian territory, some certain Indian territories, but they went ahead and they built anyway against the tribes wishes, the Chumash Indians that lived there. And so there's a lot of folklore saying well, the reason why this happened, if something bad happens, you say the reason that this happened is because there are Indian burial grounds there. But you know, you never know, things just happen. But that's the story there a lot. Maybe it happened because there are Indian burial grounds there. So. It's kind of funny.

I have a story that happened with me, when I went back. This is an odd story. I went back and I brought my daughter. My daughter was 2 years old at the time. And she accidentally picked up something on the ground and started eating it and almost choked on it. And my friends' housecleaner went up and gave my daughter the Heimlich maneuver and it came out. And the woman that saved my daughter, she was a Chumash Indian. And so, and so my friend said, "the reason she could save your daughter is because she's a Chumash", so there's a lot of those kind of stories going on, that may or may not be true, but they're kind of in

It's a coincidence.

Yeah, it's a coincidence.

So how many kids do you have?

I have one daughter

Does she live here?

She lives in San Francisco.

How's your daughter doing?

She's doing great. She's doing great. She's a writer and a poet. She also works, um, she works in several. She has 4 or 5 jobs. She works for a couple of catering businesses and she works at an antique store and she also has a writing workshop where she helps people with their writing.

Um, I'm trying to think of something interesting to say. (to the other interviewer) do you have anything you want to say.

No

End of Tape

CATHY DANA

Interviewed by Madison Akins and Izabella Rios

Ok so, what's your name?

Cathy Dana.

Where and, where were you born?

I was born in southern California. It's a little town called Loma Linda

What year?

1953.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Ontario, California which is right nearby. It's in Southern California and it's got, you know where L.A. is right? It's East of L.A.

What was your occupation?

As a child, I was a student. (giggles). As a grown-up, as a grown-up I am a, I do hypnotherapy and massage.

You hypnotize people?

I hypnotize people. For all different kinds of problems and different things that people want in their life.

Can you hypnotize me and make me laugh?

To make you laugh. Ooo, what do you want to laugh at?

Anything, I just need a laugh.

You need a laugh. That's a great one. I could probably do that.

Could you hypnotize me to make me stop laughing?

The main criteria for if you can be hypnotized is if there's something you want, I can do that. I can work with that. So yes.

So how was it like in east L.A.?

It was Southern California so it was really hot in the summer. So maybe in the 90's all summer. And when we were, I was like maybe 8, we got, it's called a DoughBoy Pool that you can go swimming in your backyard, and um, what did you ask me, what was it like there?

Yes.

So, in the summers it was really hot we liked to go down to the high school to the Plunge and go swimming. When I got old enough I got a car and my girlfriends and me would go down to Newport Beach and we would go swimming and all that kind of stuff. I went to a big old high school, 3200 kids at my school. Big old high school.

How was it like in your childhood?

Well, do you want to know like if I have brothers and sisters and stuff like that?

If you want to share that.

I'm happy to share anything. So, good question. So I have, my two younger brothers, one brother. So there's me and there's my brother a year and then two years more. So Greg and Paul. My dad, my father had been in WWII. And he, during, when he was in high school he was the captain of the gymnastics team, he liked to climb trees and he was really active. But in WWII he got shot in the leg and so he, all the time I knew him, he had a stiff right leg that meant he couldn't bend his leg. And so he became a school psychologist. Do you guys know what a school psychologist is? He's the one that, he really advocated for the kids and worked with the different kids. So my dad was a school psychologist. My mom, was, she had dropped out of hi, out of college to have us kids. But she went back to college and she went all the way through college, then a master's degree and then a PhD. So she was a Professor of Literature. She was an English Professor.

Why do you want to share your story?

That's a hard question. Well, what I wrote on there is that I used to belong to this, it was a women's group of storytelling. We would get together every Monday and we would tell stories out of our life. And I think that from stories you can really um, you can learn a lot and you can. Think of it, every movie, every tv

show. What's behind it? A story. Stories are like the most, um, basic part of anything of entertainment, there's a story in it. So I thought I have some good stories.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

Anything else! Like how long do you have, ten years? I could tell you a lot of things. What kind of things are you guys interested in, what do you like in school.

Do you know about the Point, Alameda Point?

Tell me, no. tell me about it.

Oh I thought you knew about it?

Only, hardly, she told me like this little teeny, tiny little bit. I hardly know anything.

How long have you been living in Alameda?

Oh, I moved to Alameda in 1985.

Was it like how it is now?

I'd say it's more crowded now.

That's the same thing the last guy told us.

Really. I'll tell you one thing, driving. The traffic's way more crowded. People love the Bay Area. You guys don't know. You prob, have you travelled anywhere else?

I have went to Sacramento.

You went to Sacramento? Ok, so, Sacramento's big though too. Have you guys ever went to any other states or countries?

I went to, uh, Georgia, Florida, Myrtle Beach and South Carolina.

Cool. My grandmother lived in Florida and I never went there. I've never gone through any of the southern states. But um we had exchange students living at my house in the last. I have a son, he's 23 years old. He went to alameda community learning center. And when he was a junior in high school.

ACLC?

ACLC, uh-huh, I teach at ACLC. So when he was a junior we decided to have an exchange student from France, David. So he came and we had him for 6 months. The next year we had Mark from Germany. And then after that we had, um, I think the next we had Emma from Sweden and Ava from Italy. Then we had Joe from China, Lawrence from Germany, and um, what's the other one, Killian from Paris and then finally we had Igor. He's from Russia and we had him for two years. So we had all these exchange students. So one of the things my husband and I did is we went to go visit them. We got to go stay with their families, in Sweden, two in Germany and one in France, the French Alps. And if you ever get a chance to travel, it's so fun, you see things you never expected to see. All kinds of things. It's really fun.

When you were a youth, where did you travel to?

Ah, when I was your age, let me think. It was when I was in college that I first started travelling because I went. I was 20 and there's something called the World Campus Afloat. Where you do a semester at sea. So you're on a ship, I was on a ship with 450 students and about 50 different teachers. And we went, it goes all different places in the world, but where we went, we went to Hawaii, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Australia, Fiji, Tahiti. We went all over the pacific. Are you texting? Oh.

Playing with my fingers.

Playing with your fingers. 'Cause I'm a teacher, I'm trained to see when people look down. I'm like, what do you have there, what kind of thing are you playing with. In my classes you have to focus you can't use it. Anyway.

When you was in high school what did you, like did you, when you was in high school did you like sports?

I loved sports.

What sports did you like?

Volleyball. I especially liked volleyball. But you know, when I went to high school. Now, I don't know, do you guys have PE every day?

Not now. Not in high school.

What grade are you guys in?

9th, she's in 7th. (between interviewers) you're in 7th grade, no you're in 6th grade 'cause you just graduated last year. (Unintelligible)

Which school do you guys go to?

She go to Encinal, and I go right next to ACLC.

Oh you're at NEA? Oh cool. I just came from there. Cool. And where are you from?

Uh, Encinal. I go to Encinal.

That's where my husband graduated. My husband grew up here, Jim, he grew up here and he went to Encinal High. Anyway, what sports? When I went to high school we had PE every day and so every quarter it changed to a different sport. We got to play everything you can imagine and I loved it. It was so fun. We played anything from gymnastics, badminton, softball, basketball, volleyball, swimming, golf, tennis. Every kind of sport and we would do things. But I was on the volleyball team for a while.

I have a question. Since you said golf, did the high school have an open area?

No we went, we got to go off campus and go do golfing. We had a huge campus, so we played just like, for the putting green kind of thing, you know, with the little ball on the school. But then we got to go to the big golf course. Just once. Just one time. And we had a big, big, big Olympic size swimming pool. So we had a good pool. You guys have a good pool.

Olympic size swimming pool!

But you guys, don't you have, isn't your pool big?

Yeah, we have to go swim in the morning, third period. Uh, 11 o'clock, we have to swim. I was hecka mad. It was hecka cold. They say they preheat the pool, was it hot?

Was it warm?

No.

Do you guys get showers afterwards?

Yeah.

Yeah. We had that too. Good follow-up question.

Well, besides school, what did you like to do?

Like. I was part of a singing, I liked to sing, so I was part of this group called Up With People and we would tour around. We sang at Disneyland, and we sang at oh, like, places where there were kids, or hospitals, or. Where else did we sing? I don't know, we sang at a lot of different places. That was really fun.

I was really active in school. I became the, in my senior year, I was the Girls League Vice-President. I was the Treasurer for my class. What else did I do? I did a bunch of things like that. I liked. Oh I was in. We all had clubs, the TriHiY (?) Clubs. So I was in a club. I was the president of that.

Did you like writing?

I loved to write! I'm glad you asked that. I loved to write. When I was in third grade, I had the best teacher, Mrs. Law, because she loved creative writing. And so there was a little group of us that,

What was her first name?

Her first name was Ellen. Ellen Law. Did you know a Mrs. Law?

She's my third grade teacher.

You're kidding. Your third grade teacher was Mrs. Law. Oh, my god, that's a coincidence. Wow, that's wild.

At what school?

That was down in Ontario so it was San Antonio Elementary School.

San Antonio Elementary?

San Antonio Elementary School.

Has you ever taught at, like, Piedmont or any of the other elementary schools. Ruby Bridges. Or do you know anybody at those schools.

I don't.

Or like Las Palmas in Patterson or something.

No, I know, 'cause my son went to Peyden.

Peyden. Oh

So I know some teachers like Ms. Gill at Peyden. Do you know her?

No I didn't go to Peyden. I went to three elementary schools, Las Palmas Elementary School in Patterson. I went to Piedmont in Oakland and I moved to Alameda and I went to Ruby Bridges.

Oh. Do you know Robbie Wilson?

Robbie Wilson, Robbie Wilson, he works –

It's a girl.

Oh Ms. Robbie!

Big Robbie. Yeah. I had a drum circle with her for many years. She leads.

She wears glasses? Yeah I know Ms. Robbie. She's nice.

She leads drumming. We did drumming.

Before you moved to alameda.

Oh I know what else I liked, on your follow-up, what else. I liked music. In fourth grade I started playing violin. So I played violin for six years. So I was in the orchestra in middle school.

Before you moved to alameda, where did you move?

Well I moved a lot. Because. I lived in Ontario until I was 18. Then I went to college in Santa Cruz. You guys all been to Santa Cruz, to the Boardwalk?

Yes, I have.

Where?

Have you been to Santa Cruz, the Boardwalk.

Yes. Yeah. I love that place.

So I went to school there.

At Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. That must have been cool.

I went to school there all four years and I liked it so much I stayed one more year because I was a teaching assistant.

Roller coaster.

And I did like the roller coaster, I do like that roller coaster. I like the, what is it, not Top Gun, One Shot, something.

Drop Zone.

It's like Drop Zone. I forget what they called it.

Drop Drop or something.

Something like that, I forget. Anyway, so I moved to Santa Cruz, then I went back down south to go to Graduate School. Then I moved back up here. I lived in Berkeley, then I lived in San Francisco for 5 years, and then I came to Alameda.

So you were travelling a lot.

Do you know where Hunters Point was?

I do know where it is.

Is it ghetto over there?

I haven't really been to it, like, extensively. Probably. That's what they say. Have you been there?

I just heard of it.

In the 1950's how was it?

Wow, in the 1950's? I know more the 1960's, 'cause I was born in 1953, so I was just little. But I will tell you a couple things. One thing, in southern California where I lived, the smog started being a bad problem. You know what smog is?

Like bad pollution?

Bad pollution. So when I was little, there's these mountains right. If you looked from our house, like about 15 minutes away, there's the San Bernardino Mountains. Mt. Baldy. When I was little you could see it all year 'round. When I started growing up, all summer, the air quality, the smog was so bad you could not even see Mt. Baldy. You didn't even know there was a mountain there, that's how bad the air was. And when we would go swimming, afterwards it would hurt to breathe, and it would hurt our lungs, and I thought swimming made your lungs hurt.

Like when you breathe in, like.

Yeah, like when you breathe, it was like, argh. It was the air quality. But people didn't realize back then how damaging it was. So we all had that. What was your question? What was I answering?

Oh, in the 1950's,

Oh what was it like?

Oh were you alive when slavery was going on? Not slavery, but when they used to treat black people differently?

Well, where I was, I didn't see any of that. So. I think they still do in the South in some places. It's still going on. It's not as, still, it depends, it's still going on. There's still Klu Klux Klan.

What is a Klu Klux Klan?

The Klu Klux Klan, those are people that, they're called White Supremacists. There's White Supremacists here too, but mostly they're in the South. They put on these white hoods, these pointed white hoods so you can't see their face. And they go out and they find, they find some person of color and, um, they'll either they'll like, sometimes they'll like burn a ring in their lawn, or sometimes they'll hurt them or hang them.

Oh, if anybody try to hang me.

You know they're a very hateful group. They're a hateful group. So when I was growing up, I did not witness any of that. And in my family, we were very much for what we call civil rights. We wanted everybody to have that equal protection.

I'd like to say this. Who gave you your name?

Ah. I think my mom. I have her middle name, Catherine Elizabeth. That's her middle name and I think she liked the name Catherine. Back then she said hardly anyone was named Cathy. But everybody seemed to like that name all at the same time, so there was a lot of Cathy's always in my classes. Now you don't see very many. Not very many Cathy's in your class, right. I think in my students I see only one. So it was a popular name then. But you know there are certain names right now that are popular, you know, like Jasmine, or Jennifer. There's certain names that are popular.

Or Kyle.

Uh huh. Certain names. And my son's named Max. back when we named him Max, nobody else was named Max, but now I see lots of Maxs in the school.

How is it at ACLC?

Aw. That's a good question. Well my, it's different than it used to be because we moved two different times and we've gotten way bigger. When my son first went there in 2009, we had only 150 students, now it's 375. It's way bigger, so it's way different. Back then, everybody could fit in the center all at once, everybody knew each other. And now, for one thing, the middle schoolers, there's way more middle schoolers than the high schoolers and so it's out of balance.

Same with NEA.

Really? Did it start small?

Uh, yeah. Well at first, as you know NEA Elementary and NEA High School/Middle was separate and now it's all together.

Right. Which way did you like it better?

Well actually, this is my first year. I heard about it last year when I was at the other campus, at Longfellow. I heard about it and it was ok. I heard it was all rowdy and this year's more civilized.

Oh. Uh huh. So what made you decide to go to NEA?

NEA? My opinion, I didn't like Encinal and my mom was going to force me to go there, until I found another close high school. NEA was closest.

Well it's funny, I went to a huge high school and then I went to a small college and I really like the smaller better.

Yeah. You can get to know people.

Yeah, the big, I don't know, it just feels too anonymous. I don't know, I like the smaller, the more together.

Did you like to read?

I love to read. We always went to the library and checked out books, so. Now my mom became an English professor, so she read to us when we were little. Did your parents read to you when you were little?

Yeah, mines did.

My mom read a lot. She read all the Wizard of Oz, and all these different Oz books. She read, did you ever read any of the Narnia books? With Aslan the lion, and all that? She read all those out loud to us. Did you ever read Charlotte's Web? She read us that. So she read us a lot and I was a really. I loved reading. I would always go to the library, check out as many books as I could, read them all, then take them back. I loved reading. And I forgot to tell you, 'cause I, Mrs. Law. When I had Mrs. Law, I had her for third, fourth and fifth grade. I still am friends with her. She's 95. I flew down.

95!

I flew down for her 95th birthday, she's still totally going strong. She's amazing.

I need to see Ms. Law.

She is amazing.

Where does she work at?

She doesn't work anymore, 'cause she's retired, but she used to teach down in southern California.

At where?

Oh, gosh, I don't know all.

San Antonio's in southern California?

It is, but it's no longer there.

(between interviewers) you went to school in southern California?

No, she has her own Mrs. Law up here. A different one. But Mrs. Law got us writing. And we wrote. There was four of us, Judy, Cindy, Dorothy and me. We were like the schools poets. We wrote a lot of poetry and short stories. And then I decided, I started writing a short story about a little girl from the Revolutionary War, you know, when our country was just starting, who gets separated from her mother. And so she searches for two years in the wilderness to try and find her mother. And my story turned out to be 140 pages long, so it was, it turned out to be a little book. So she really got me writing.

Can I ask another question? In college, did you travel to a lot of colleges, or did you just stay at one?

I stayed at one. That was my first choice, U.C. Santa Cruz, and I got in. back then, they weren't accepting very many people so it was this really lucky thing that I got in. I was so happy. I was really happy. So I stayed there, except for that one semester when I went on that ship. That was my junior year. We went on the ship and so I went to all different kinds of ports then. That was really fun.

That sounds really amazing.

Yeah, it was pretty amazing. It was pretty amazing.

Um, were you interested in shoes growing up?

Shoes, like did I like cute shoes?

Like Mephisto shoes?

They didn't have all those, all those like. I remember when Nike first came into being, I was in college already. They didn't have 'em in high school. I think we wore things like,

Reeboks?

No they didn't have Reeboks yet. They had Keds, and um, oh gosh, tennis shoes. What are the ones you can wear if you wear a skirt?

Toms?

No. what were they? They came in all different colors.

Jellies? Converse?

Converse! They had those back then, I used to love those. Those are the ones I know kids wear with skirts. I like to wear skirts a lot. You see me in jeans; usually I wear skirts.

Like now, you wear skirts?

Uh huh. Most of the time.

I like skirts.

I do too. My mom got me into skirts. So shoes, I was more like dressier shoes, more like shoes you would wear with skirts. Other than that, I guess tennis shoes.

When that lady asks you how I did, can you tell her I did excellent?

I'll think about it. I think you, I think you all are doing great.

When you were growing up, were you ever bullied or anything like that?

I was lucky, I wasn't really bullied. Although I would say I was kind of a bully to my little brothers. But not physically, more like verbally, like I would say mean things to them. Especially my next brother. Um, I do remember, in third grade, there was this boy Chuck that I bullied him, some of us bullied him because he was, I don't know. He was, he was annoying I guess.

Do you ever regret bullying him?

Totally. I feel bad. That poor kid. He was probably really unhappy, and we just made it worse. I totally regret it.

Um, have you ever got in any fights or anything?

One time. I had this friend named Nancy, Nancy Bogner. She lived around the corner. And I was more the quiet, you know, do the right thing kind of girl, you know I didn't get in trouble very much. But Nancy, oh my gosh, she was, she was pretty a tough girl and kind of like out there taking risks and stuff. So when I, when. In first grade there was this boy named Gerald, Gerald Patrick. And one time we saw that he was copying off my paper and so Nancy said, "Let's beat him up after school".

So we followed him. We started hitting him after school. And he started crying. And this lady came out of her house and she made us stop. And I didn't know, I was six years old, I didn't really realize what we were doing. I realized it was wrong, but I felt bad about it. I felt like that was a mean thing to do and I was,

Did your mom and dad find out after that?

Nobody ever, 'cause that lady didn't know us. Nobody ever told on us. But I regret it. I think about it now and I think, aw that was mean. I shouldn't have done that. That wasn't good at all. But no one ever knew, so I didn't ever get in trouble, just in my own mind.

Have you ever broken any bones?

On my gosh, that's a good question. That's a good story. Ok. Well, when I was 3 ½, well my dad built this playhouse in our back yard. It was two stories high, like a play structure. Nobody back then had any play structures like you see now. But it had, um, like you went up this ladder, so there was like this whole second floor. But it was all open. It had just this little, just a little railing around it. It had a rope you could swing on. It had a pole you could slide down. It had a chin-up bar, and it was in our back yard.

So when I was just 3 ½, I was climbing up it and I fell off and I broke my arm. I broke this arm. And I had to be in the hospital for a week. Because I'd been exposed to Chicken Pox, they put me in the Isolation Ward. So I wasn't with the other kids.

You were exposed to Chicken Pox when you broke your bone?

Before it. My little brother had it. So when they put me in the hospital, I couldn't be where all the other kids were all playing and stuff, no. I had to be in the Isolation Ward with all these babies in oxygen tents and stuff. It was terrible.

Did it hurt when you broke the bone?

I don't remember it hurting. What I do remember is I remember my. Back then, parents could only come to the hospital one hour a day. So the rest of the time, by myself, you know alone there in the hospital. And I'm 3 ½, I'm just a little, just a teeny little kid. So when my mom would leave, I would cry. And the nurses would yell at me. And they would tell me that I was a big girl, and I wasn't supposed to cry and I was waking up the babies. And that really traumatized me. That made me feel like I was all alone and nobody to care about me. So after that, I would never cry in front of anybody. My whole, up until college, if I started to cry, I would leave the room. I would let nobody see me cry, because of what those nurses said to me. 'Cause it affected me.

So when I was in college I had a friend named Charlin and she, one time something happened, and she came in and she was crying and I was like aw, it's ok. And then after that I asked her, "can I please learn how to cry in front of you?". And so she said "Ok" and so we tried it out and I practiced until I could cry in

front of people. I wanted to be able to cry in front of people, which I now can. So that's my first broken bone story. I have more broken bone stories though.

Um.

Wait, wait, tell us.

Alright, but. Do you have a follow-up on that, or is it a whole new topic? A whole new topic? Well, ask your question and I'll see which one I'm going to answer. I'll come back to that.

At ACLC, how, what is it like to be the school psychologist?

Oh, I'm not. I teach something called creative expressions and creative writing. See I love Mrs. Law teaching me how to write. I grew up and now I'm teaching writing. So I have 6th and 7th graders that I do storytelling with. And like, I'll say, ok let's talk about injuries, who had an injury, tell your story. Or, who, tell me, tell me um. You know we'll do stories on different topics like just recently we did. That was nicely done, how you did that. Very, um, gentle and nice. Um, we did stories. Just recently I asked them all, if you had a super power, what super power would you have?

So what super power would you want to have?

(unintelligible)

Oh wow, one other person had that. Ok. What would you have?

(between interviewers) Oh my God, you do this every single time.

She's a thinker. She wants to think about it. What would you have? We'll let her think.

I would have to read people minds. To know what they're thinking and to be invisible

Ah. And invisible. And what would you have?

I would be a human torch.

Oo, a human torch. Oh wow. So I asked everybody in my class, I said "with your super power", oh and me, I would have the power to heal other people. That's the power I would say I'd like. So, I asked,

I'd be the smartest person 'cause I could find every cure.

Ah, 'cause you could read their minds, that's true. That's a good power to have. So I asked everybody "What would you do. What's one thing you would do for yourself? What's one thing you would do for the world? And you just said yours, you'd find a cure. So that's good.

I'd go back in time.

You'd go back in time, ah.

(Unintelligible conversation)

Oo and Ebola. You could do a lot with that super power.

How could I find a cure for Ebola by reading somebody's mind?

Well, you're right. If nobody knows it yet. But you might be able to take what everybody, all the different people's knowledge, put it together and find the answer. Maybe you could do that. Because maybe no one person knows, but maybe if you put it together.

Ok. Should we come back to the broken bones?

Uh huh.

Ok. Broken bones.

Have you broke any recently?

Yes I have. Three bicycle accidents in 2008. 'cause we're big bike riders. When I was a kid I rode my bike, but now. Oh, like I rode my bike to Santa Cruz, and

All the way to Santa Cruz?

All the way to Santa Cruz.

Just biking?

Well actually we started from Half Moon Bay. Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz. 50 miles. 50 miles. And my longest ride was 60 miles. But we would ride up in the hills and you know, do a lot of climbing. So, in 2008 I was riding my bike with Team Alameda. Have you heard of Team Alameda? Team Alameda is a bicycle riding club that meets on Saturdays and Sundays and sometimes other days.

(unintelligible conversation)

Well my husband used to be the ride leader captain of Team Alameda. And they do different level rides. So that, like people that are in good shape, they'll go riding up into the hills. For people who are, um, not as good, they go, they do rides around like to the San Leandro Marina or to Point Richmond. Different places. So, I was on a ride. It was only my third ride. It had rained, so it was wet. And I was just riding on this path to the San Leandro Marina. And the next thing, somebody said something behind me and I turned, and the next thing I knew, Bam! I was on my, down, and my sho. Actually I was lying like this (demonstrates) because I had broken and dislocated this shoulder. And I was just lying there like this and they said, "Can you get up?" and I said "no". He said "can you sit up?" I said "no, I can't move at all"

And you were really serious?

Serious. So they had to get the paramedics. But the paramedics were so great. The paramedics were so great, do you know what they did? He came up, because I was lying on the ground like this, and my arm was like this. 'cause I couldn't move it, 'cause my shoulder was out of its location. You know what the paramedic did?

He popped it back in the socket?

He didn't. It took three doctors to do that. They had to put, they had to take me in the ambulance. He put his head. Here's my head, he put his head on the ground just like this so he could talk to me right, you know, the same where I was. It was so sweet. And they were so nice to me. And they took me in the, they had to take. They gave me something, something to help with the pain. And then, it was, oh, three months before it was really healed. It took a while.

And then two years later, I fell and I sprained this one again. And then two years later, I fell and I broke this wrist and this collarbone. But they're healed now. You can see I'm healed. What?

That's all we're going to ask you for today.

Wait, she has a idea. Is it a question, or what is it?

Come on. (between interviewers)

It's an idea. Go ahead

(unintelligible) ... write poems

Oh, I'm so glad. That makes me really happy. If you write a poem I want to see it. I love that!

Ok, well that's all we're going to ask you today. It was nice meeting you.

CHRISTINE WARREN

Interviewed by Lizbeth Herrera, Izabella Rios and Herbert Lee

What kind of things did you like to do when you were little?

I wasn't able to do a whole lot, because I was very sickly. So, my sister wanted to go out and play and I would have to stay in and read or play games by myself. I loved to read, and, so I read early. Well, every time I was sick I went to bed, that's what you did in those days. No TV, no telephones in the room, we had one telephone in the whole house. So I went to bed and I listened to the radio or I read.

When you were young, did you like any sports?

I couldn't play sports. And even during school, when they went out to PE, I had to do something else. In high school when they went out to PE, we made the cheerleaders costumes. And they were not made out of cloth, they were made out of crepe paper. So, you know, that's the type of thing we did. Sometimes we would play ping-pong, but my life was limited, very limited.

What kind of books did you like to read?

I read every book I got ahold of. I can remember going to the library when I was older. I could go on the bus to the library. And I started at one end of the, probably, junior high age level room, because I was advanced, and I started and I read every book on the top shelf and then the next shelf and the next shelf. I went through dogs. I went through horses. I went through all kinds of animals. And then as I got older, *Nancy Drew*. Are you familiar with that? I didn't like *The Hardy Boys*, 'cause they were boys not girls. But it was all reading, really, because I couldn't run around.

Did you have a favorite book?

My *Nancy Drew* books were probably the favorite. And we moved into a home, and the neighbor had two teenage girls and they had all the *Nancy Drew* books. So I borrowed them. Started with the first and just went through them all. So they were my favorite at the time.

What was your favorite kind of music to listen to?

Um, we didn't listen to a lot of music. When I listened to the radio, it was mainly because I was sick in bed. I would listen to programs like *The Lone Ranger* or *The Green Hornet*, if you're familiar with those. But they were only half-hour programs, like half-hour, you have half-hour programs on TV, it was a half-hour. And , uh, but I did more reading than I did anything else.

What did your parents. What job did your parents do?

My father worked for Breuner's, and Breuner's is a department store. And my mother stayed home, but when we were in college, she taught school. She taught in a one-room schoolhouse years ago, before she got married. They had all eight grades in one room. And then, when she had us, she stopped working.

Do you know what the school name was?

That she taught in? No. it was in a little town called, um, Diamond Springs, I think. It's up in the foothills toward the gold country and toward Tahoe, going up from here to Tahoe. Have you ever been to Tahoe?

No. I have a friend who went there.

Skiing in the winter, swimming in the summer.

In school, in your school, did you have a mascot?

A what?

A mascot, like

A mascot?

Yeah. Like for ? they have the Puma, the junior Jets they have the Jet..

Oh, we had the. High school. I don't remember. That's too long ago. I can't remember, I'm sorry.

Did you like, did you think any other sports were cool?

Cool was not even a word that had been invented. Except to be cool, you wanted to be cool. In high school you went to the football games. And, uh, but even then, the football players were not as "special" as they are today. We went because it was the high school football game. You went with your boyfriends, or you went with your girlfriends. Um, I didn't like basketball as much. To me it was boring. But football was

exciting, because, I guess because basketball was usually played during the day or, you know, after school, and football we could go and be a date, which was very important.

Did you guys have to wear uniforms?

Oh no. Not in those days. The only people that had to wear uniforms were the people that went to Catholic schools. We had a couple of Catholic schools in Sacramento. And they had to wear uniforms. But, um, oh wait a minute. When I was in first and second grade I went to a Catholic school and I had to wear a uniform then. We had those little tie things that you had to wear, a sailor collar. Do you know what a sailor collar is? And the little tie that came down. That's, actually my mother probably liked it, because she didn't have to buy so many clothes, or make so many clothes.

That's another thing I could do. Because I couldn't run around, I could sew. My mother taught me to sew. And we were given, when I hit junior high school, a five dollar a week allowance. For five dollars we were to buy all our clothes and all our entertainment. But we didn't get the money. Dad kept a record of it and would give us what we needed. And, so, that's why you learned to sew. In those days, sewing was a lot cheaper. A lot cheaper than buying the clothes.

Did you like to sew?

I did then, because I wanted the results. I didn't like the doing of it, particularly, but I liked the results. When I was going to a special dance that I needed a special dress, it was fun to make it and choose the color and so forth. I was so disappointed when I learned that my mother had thrown away, or given away, all of our formals that we wore and all our cocktail type dresses we wore. Because we were married and gone, so she didn't ask us if we wanted them. What would I do with them anyway? But she just gave them away.

What kind of things would you sew?

Dresses, pants, skirts, blouses. Um. Mother, mother and dad gave us one coat a year and one pair of shoes a year before school started and we sewed everything else. Everything in my closet I made. And we'd save until the end of the season and buy swimming suits for the next year. 'Cause in Sacramento you did a lot of swimming, it's hot.

Or we would buy sweaters. Cashmere, you could get a cashmere sweater on sale, for \$19. Of course, that was three, three and a half weeks allowance, but you know, if you made all your clothes you saved a lot of money. And of course, your shoes always had to match your outfit, so we had to save money for those. But we bought the, we bought the cheapies. I guess here it would be the equivalent of what you get at Payless. But they had shoe stores.

But you know the thing that I thought might be interesting, was my, was my grandparents and great-grandparents history. Because my great-grandparents, the men, grandfathers came from Germany. And they left Germany because Germany was going to have a 10 year requirement for the men to be in the service. So they left and came here. The problem is that when they came here, the Civil War was going on. The war between the South and the North. And they landed in the South. So one of my grandfathers was pulled into the war for the South. He got captured and he was put in prison. And the soldiers of the North said, "you fight for us, we will let you out of prison". He probably didn't even understand English very well. People didn't come knowing English. So um, he fought for the North. So we have copies of his papers pulling him into the Southern army and when they, when he left the service, from the North. And that was kind of unusual in those days. It's unusual now.

The other pair got married on a wagon train. They were coming on the Oregon Trail and they were coming to the West, to the gold fields. They'd discovered gold. And, um, they got married on the wagon train. And I thought that was interesting too. But those are the things that I, of course the younger people would probably feel that modern things are more important. But, to me, that was really special when I learned that. I don't know if it means anything to you or not.

Do you like, when you were little, did you like any little animals?

Oh, I wanted a pet so bad, but I was allergic to dogs. I was allergic to cats. So my grandmother was raising canaries. So I had a canary, until Petey died. So that's the only pet I had. Now when my son was growing up, because I was allergic to those two things, and every boy wants a dog, or a cat, or something, he had a

parakeet. He had a hamster and he had a snake. A (?) Boa, and it's a real snake. They don't bite. And it was kept in a little plastic terrarium thing. Oh and he also had a rat. When we got the rat he was small. Then Frederick grew, and grew, and grew and then with his tail he was probably about that long (demonstrating). And the day I got out of bed and Freddy was right under my feet instead of in his cage, Frederick left. And he went to my son's day-care. Well, Frederick became Frederica and had babies. Thank goodness he didn't have bab, there's no male around my place. So I like animals. It's just that if I touch a dog or a cat, I immediately have to go wash my hands.

Is there any other pets that you would like, you would have like to have?

Yeah, I'd like a dog. I'd like a cat, you know something you can cuddle with. Particularly now, at this age. Of course, if my son was doing it, when he was young, he would have wanted something to run around with him. But at this age I'd like to have something I could just sit, on my lap or with me, next to me or whatever, but no can do.

Where did you get your name from?

I don't know where they got Christine. The Ann they got from my grandmother, my middle name. um, just as they named my sister, her middle name was after her, our, grandfather. One of our grandfathers. I don't know. My generation had all boys. There were two of us in the family, my sister and I, and we both had boys. And the generation, my boys, my son's generation, had boys too. So we have no girls in the family. But you know, that's ok. Boys are easier to raise than girls. And I taught school. And if I had to have a room of one or the other, I would take the room full of boys. Sorry girls. But they are much easier and not as, this is a weird word, but not as nit-picky. You know what I mean? And I don't know about girls today, I really don't, because I haven't taught school since 2000. That was a long time ago. But at that time, the girls would pick on each other and they would. I had one girl, in one class, and she would, she'd pretend she'd tripped and then blame the person sitting in the seat near where she was walking. But the girl hadn't done anything! You know, that type of thing. Where boys were just kind of laid-back and more relaxed. Some did their work and some were a bit immature, but they were easier to handle, calmer. Maybe that's why I had boys. The good Lord knew what he was doing.

In Michigan, how was it in your time?

Ask that again?

In Michigan.

(another person in the room). I think we have the wrong paper.

No I grew up in California.

So how was it in California in your time?

Um, in Sacramento, where I did most of my growing up, it was very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. I can remember coming, no air-conditioning that was pre air conditioning, and I can remember coming home from school and taking all my clothes off, except my panties, which you probably can relate to. And we had plaster walls which were cool, and we'd go back and forth against the cold, cooler, plaster walls. Um, you always walked to school. You always walked home. It was safe. Now they worry about little children, um

Getting hit by cars?

Hit by a car, or someone grabs them. You know you hear it on the news all the time. And my son would, and we would also when I was growing up, you know we'd do our chores and then we'd, most kids would go out and play. My son I wouldn't see until maybe lunchtime, or he would call and say, "Mom, I'm going to eat at so-and-so's" and I wouldn't see him until dinner. But he had his limits and he stuck to them. And they had a lot of freedom that children don't have these days. I can remember going out trick-or-treating alone, and that was a big deal. Coming back about 9 o'clock, it was dark, you know. And you can't do that these days, which is sad. But there was more freedom.

I had less, because of my health, but most children had more freedom. And to let a 8,9, 10 year old child go on the bus to the library. Would you do that now? Maybe in Alameda, but that's about it. You wouldn't do it in Oakland. You wouldn't do it in any big city.

When were you born?

I was born in May of 1939. So I'm 75 now. Um. In fact I was looking at some information (looking around), I don't know where I left it. Anyway they had, dad had my footprint, for me. At the hospital they did, you know the two little footprints, to make sure they had the right baby. For my sister who was born 19 months later, they had one footprint and one fingerprint. So you could see a way to identify. Footprints, I don't know how good footprints are, how individual they are. But it was just a good time. I felt very, very blessed to have lived in that time. Of course we didn't have TV until I was a senior in high school. My father worked in a home furnishing store, and we were saving for college. College in those days. My dad showed us the overall bill for us going to college. It was \$2400 for four years of college. You can't even do one year. You can't even do one year for that.

You say you taught at schools?

I taught at school here in the Bay Area. I taught in Richmond off of Cutting Blvd. Do you know that area? It's kind of a rough area. And then I moved out and taught in Hercules which is a newer city of commerce and that was pleasant. That was, it was less stress. When I was taught, when I was teaching in Richmond, it was about the time that Martin Luther King died, was killed. And everyone was afraid of what would happen. Nothing happened, but he was really afraid of it. He didn't want me going down there. So that was the last year I went down there. But I loved teaching, it was wonderful. And the thing I miss most are the kids. It was neat. A great job.

Where were you born?

Sacramento.

What city?

Sacramento.

I mean like, what area?

Oh, ok, you mean. Have you been to Sacramento?

I have, one time.

Sacramento has a very large park and it has an area that is, not a rich area. If you lived near or around the park you were rich, but we were out a ways. But it was a nice area. Originally the area we lived in had been vegetable gardens. After the war, or sometime, no it was before the war. Anyway, originally it was vegetable gardens and mostly run by Japanese growers. And then as the city grew, they bought the land from the farmers and built homes. It was like a tract of homes, but different. So in a vacant lot you could go. You could go in a vacant lot and run into tomato plants or maybe a lettuce plant. Just nice, nice things. But of course, you know, we played in the vacant lot. They never leveled it off after they built the buildings, and this one lot was not used. They just left the hills and the valleys and we had forts and all kinds of things. It was nice.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

Well, the reason I agreed to do this was because of my family history more than anything else. Because I just thought it was so unusual, with the two different great-grandfathers. But that was the main reason. I just thought it would be different.

(another person in the room) Do you have any other questions?

They ran out of questions.

(Break in questioning)

Like it? Usually. I didn't like having to take Chemistry. Chemistry was the one thing that I didn't like. I think because it was memorizing, and that was hard for me. English and History and all that, that was easy for me. But Chemistry, with all those darn form, what were they called, not formulas, uh, elements? I don't know. Anyway something you had to memorize.

The Periodic Table?

You're right. That's it, the Periodic Table. And you had to memorize it. At least in those days you did. You couldn't look it up on your phone or computer or anything else. You either memorized it or you didn't pass the course. And so, instead of taking a year of Chemistry, I took a year and a half of Chemistry. I took it during the summer. But I did pass.

Nowadays, in Chemistry, don't they sometimes dissect frogs or something?

Biology.

Oh.

Yes, I did take a Biology class, but it was for teachers. And because teachers of elem, I mean people who wanted to be teachers. So because we wanted to be teachers of young people, we didn't have to dissect. But those who wanted to go on with the sciences, yes. But a lot of my schooling was centered around being a teacher. Because at the time that I graduated from high school, we were given an option; you could be a secretary, you could be a teacher, or you could be a nurse. Those were the three things you went to school for. You didn't have the option of, I mean you didn't have to go to college, you could clean houses and you could do other things, but there were not as many options. And I didn't want to clean house. And I didn't want to cook. So I wanted to be a teacher. My mother had been a teacher, my great aunt had been a teacher and I liked children. My sister was not fond of the idea, so she didn't want to go into teaching. And she never had to work, luckily for her.

But I was very lucky to have been a teacher and have been teaching, because my husband died when I was 35 and he was 37. So if I had not had a good way to earn a living, I might have lost the house. We might have had to go rent something. Who knows? So I was very blessed. I really was. That was a good question.

What was it like to be a single mom raising kids at the time?

I only had one, 'cause we lost one. At the time, the feeling was you should be married. So within two or three months, people were introducing me to men. But as a teacher, everyone knew that I had a good salary. They knew that I had good insurance. And the men that I met, this is going to sound weird, but the men that I met wanted to lean on me. They liked the idea I had insurance. They liked the idea I had a steady job. So I just stopped dating. I dated for a year and a half, two years. I did have a couple of proposals, but they've since been married to two or three different people too. Why would I want to be that way? Why do I want people to lean on me? It's this mutual thing, or you take care of me totally, you know. But I didn't, I just.

And my son, he was 10 when his dad died. It was in November. The following summer, he decided that he knew what he wanted in a step-father. So he gave me this list. And when I looked at the list, it was everything he and his dad used to do. He wanted someone who would go skiing with him that would play golf with him, play tennis with him, all these things that he and his dad did. That was what he wanted. So, I mean what, there was no way. There was not going, there was not going to be a substitute for his dad. An addition to, ok, but not a substitute. So. I just. When you're teaching school, and eventually when he was old enough, when he was in college, I would take off and travel during the summer. And teachers could earn credits for the top of the pay scale by travelling and then writing like a report on the travels. Particularly when you went someplace that you could relate to what you taught. The year I turned 50, I took a half a year off of school, my son was in college at the time, and I went to, um, Massachusetts, not Boston, that little peninsula, where the Pilgrims landed and, you know it's an arm. Anyway, they have a replica, a lot of history back there. And I rented a place and stayed for one month, the month of my birthday.

And I saw where the Pilgrims landed. Where they met the Indians for the first time. I went to museums. I walked the beach where the Pilgrims met the Indians. I went to every museum I could find. I went to the antique stores. I just did whatever I wanted. Obviously, for the first time, all by myself. And I had a ball. So that's

Where else have you travelled to?

I went to Eastern Canada. From Halifax east. So Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island. It was a six week trip. Some people get tired of travelling after a short time, but I never got tired of travelling. So, and by then of course, I had two legs then. So we saw all kinds of wonderful things. There's a place in Halifax where the, uh, water from the ocean comes in, you know, and then goes out. You know like, with the tides. There's one river where when the river comes in, when the tide comes in, the river goes backwards. It goes back the way. You know most rivers go down to the bay and then out. But during the time when the tides come in, it goes backwards. It goes up. It was fascinating to watch.

If I had had my way, and I had not had health problems. 'Cause I taught 5th grade two years. I liked the littler ones, but I taught 5th grade for two years. And that's United States history, or was at the time. But I hadn't been to the states. If I had my way, I would have got in my car and drove to every single state. And if I had enough money, money and time, I would have rented an apartment in each state and went out like this every day to see everything. Then I'd go to the next state and do the same thing. And I'd see the fall colors if I had my way.

I did a lot of travel on the West Coast, 'cause that was quick and easy. We could take weekend trips or short trips. But the big trips were special. I like to travel, but once you can't get out and see things, it's not as much fun. I love going in the car.

End of tape.

DAS PEABODY

Interviewed by Madison Akins

So, what's your name?

My name is Das.

Where are you from and born?

I was born in Chicago, Illinois.

What year was that?

1956.

So, where did you grow up, if different?

I grew up in Hermosa Beach. And I grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa and actually travelled quite a bit.

Interesting. What was your occupation?

My occupation. Well I'm still working here at the Library, but that's only one of the things. That's sort of how I pay the bills.

What do you do here?

Oh, I'm the maintenance guy. I have the keys. I

Oh,

Yeah. I drive the van to people that are homebound and do deliveries and all that.

So what do you like to do for fun?

I do radio and TV.

Radio and TV.

I have two, three radio programs and a TV program.

What do you want to share, like your story?

My story. Which story would you like? I have no idea. I have not seen this sheet before, so you're catching me blind.

(other person in the room) do you have some follow-up questions on anything you've heard so far? Like would you like to know anything more?

Um, did you play any sports?

Yeah I played soccer and I played rugby. Until I got my legs broken.

Oh, did that hurt?

Yeah, yeah.

Did you cry?

Oh Yeah

So what did that kind of feel like?

What getting my legs broken playing rugby? It's like playing football without any padding. Cause rugby's with the little football.

'Cause I always to know what did your leg feel like broken.

Uh, I've hurt myself too many times. I used to like Motocross, do all kinds of goofy things and surf and seemed to break, break legs and arms all the time. Have to be careful, or not.

Is there anything we should know about you?

Um, like I said, I do lots of radio and TV and music around the Bay Area and, uh, that's kind of exciting.

Did, uh, have you ever been on TV?

Oh yeah.

Was it cool?

Yeah, all the time. The other show that we do that's on the community access channel, 27 Peralta College. It's like, if you go on your basic cable, it's channel 27 or 28 depending on what system you use.

Oh, ok.

And we play, and it's on three hours every month.

Three hours every, oh.

Yep. And then we've got a radio program that we do from our studio, at our house, we built a studio. And it goes to a radio station in Amsterdam.

Amster?

Amsterdam, in the Netherlands.

Wow, that's far.

Uh huh. But that's the Web. It's pretty great. You can ping it to them and then they do it like a regular radio station there.

Oh. How long have you been growing your hair? It's hecka long. I wish my hair was that long.

It took 5 or 6 years.

5 or 6 years, dang.

Yeah, but it's been like this for a long time.

Oh.

Well it doesn't get longer, 'cause I sit on it.

What high school did you go to?

Sandown High School.

Sandown?

Yeah, it's in Johannesburg.

Oh. Are you from Alameda? How long have you been living here?

No, I've been here for, like, sixteen years.

Sixteen oh, ok.

Which seems like forever huh?

Uh huh. Have you seen? That's my age. How long have you been around? I mean like not around, but do you know your way around?

Alameda?

Uh huh.

Yeah, pretty much. 'Cause I have to drive all day long with the van.

Is it fun doing jani, jantitor?

Yeah, I do that. I do very little of that, but it's more like keeping things working and deliveries and just whatever we need. Having the odd, the odd guy who isn't sitting at a desk.

Oh ok. So that's all I'm going to ask you today.

Ok

(another person in the room) no we need to ask some more questions.

What?

So let's think, what are some other things we can go through on this? So part of this is a learning process in interviewing.

Ok. Oh, I'm still learning it too. I have people come on our radio show every week and we interview them. And you learn. You never, you never, this is just a jumping off part.

What, school, what was your favorite subject in school?

My favorite subject? Hum, probably the sciences. AV, I was the AV geek at school.

Did you, were you into shoes, like "oh man I need to get this shoe"?

Nah. Nah, id actually be barefoot if I had a choice.

You really would?

Yeah. I grew up at Hermosa Beach. I like to be barefoot, be in the surf.

You like to surf? Is it fun?

Yeah. That was my sport really.

My sport, I like the BMX.

Yeah, motor cycle, or actually that would just be bicycle?

Yeah. When I'm with my friends I can just be myself and when I go to the movies, I dress hecka cute and stuff.

Uh huh.

But um. Have you ever heard of the Alameda Point Collaborative, on the base?

Yeah. It's there by the bicycle shop and we've got our little book kiosk.

I live over there. My cousin works at the bike shop.

Oh he does, cool. I bought my wife a bike there.

Oh.

And I bought my second bike there.

Ok. Interesting. Um.

(another person in the room) you said that you grew up in Africa? So that might be a good topic.

Ok. So you said that you grew up in Africa. Like, how was it like in Africa, was it like this?

It was so different. We, my dad, my dad was actually a rocket scientist.

A rocket scientist?

Yes. And he wrote a very early kind of software for rockets and all that. And because of that, we travelled a lot. And one of the places we moved to was South Africa. And, uh, this is far enough back that it was a very different South Africa than it is now. This is before Mandela, this is, yeah this is Africa when they had slaves still.

For real?

Yeah, it was horrible. It was weird. I mean it was beautiful. The country was beautiful, the people were beautiful, but the government was horrible. The schools were run like dictatorships. It was very, very strange especially for a wild American. It was very, very strange. And like, yes, we, they were so restricted that they wouldn't even let boys and girls go to the same high school together.

Dang.

Yes. There was no TV.

Like for none of the kids?

There was no TV, at all, because the government could not control it. It was very, very strange. It was a very interesting time. All of the radio was done by the government. Yeah, that was a strange thing. But there were lots of wild animals around. It was beautiful there. So there's neat things about it, but it was very strange. Very different. People spoke differently. They spoke British instead of English, or they spoke Afrikaans, which was like Old Dutch.

Dutch, uh, oh. Uh, you said you grew up in Hermosa Beach. How was that?

That's fun. That's right down by Los Angeles. That's like south of the airport down there. And uh, yeah I grew up right in the sand.

Was it fun or,

Yeah. To have the beach for your front yard. Uh huh.

That's nice.

I mean it's neat being here on the island too, 'cause they kind of have beaches everywhere.

Our beach, the beach at Alameda Point is dirty, they need to clean it.

Well, we all can help with that.

Uh huh, well, so do you like art or like music?

Yeah. I do lots of art at home and we do music and

What kind of art do you do?

Uh, mainly collage myself.

Have you ever, like, drew somebody?

Nah. I'm not very good with the hand drawing. That takes a lot of very specific kind of, you have to practice a lot. Whatever you do, you practice a lot and I practice collage, so I'm good at that.

Were you ever, when you were in high school, like, were you ever bullied?

Yeah. Oh, yeah. I was the only American in my high school. Oh, I got beat up every week. All the time.

Like really beat up?

Yeah, I got beat up all the time. And I was also short then.

So if you would run into the people you got beat up by, what would you do and say?

Now? I don't know. I have sort of, through Facebook, re-met people and it's been interesting 'cause, you know, we all grow up and you sort of go past it. And I've had people apologize. You know. Yeah, it's weird, you know. It's sort of like growing up and, you know. Sometimes it's water under the bridge and you have to forget it, you know.

Uh huh.

Sometimes you ignore them.

Um.

(Other person in the room) So where were you at high school at? Where did you go to high school?

Oh South Africa.

Ok so what was your favorite, Hermosa Beach or South Africa?

Well the beach was so gorgeous, and just being on the beach. But then, also I was young enough, 'cause we moved about your age. Like in high school. So I went to South African in high school. You know, before that, it's much easier, life is much easier, you know. You know how it is, when you're a kid, you don't have responsibilities. Living on the beach. Not having any responsibilities was really, really great but then growing up and being able to do things. Like, for the summer programs in South Africa, I would like, when there was, like, vacation from school, I would sign up for like game reserves and like live on a game reserve for three or four months. Like out where all the animals were, and take care of the animals.

Was there Boys & Girls Clubs back then?

Nah.

What about YMCA?

Nah, this was South Africa too, it's British. It's very British, yeah um.

Oh. Out there did ya'all have, did you play soccer in South Africa?

Yeah a little bit, but there were people that were really, really good. And since they don't have baseball, they don't have football, everybody plays soccer or rugby, so there were people that were really good.

Spent lots of time,

Soccer or what?

Or Rugby.

Oh.

And they didn't have basketball either.

They didn't?

Only for girls.

Only for, wow.

And they called it, what did they call it? They didn't call it basketball, oh they called it netball. They called it netball and it was only girls. But boys like, ugh, that's not a boys sport.

Uh huh. And (?) did they start playing it?

No, not too much. They might now, but they didn't then.

So like.

They have a culture that's very different.

So how was it working on radios and stuff?

How is it? It's really fun. Um, we've, you, we use software that lets us send, via the internet, all the way to this radio station in Amsterdam then we also keep our cuts up on archive.org.

Can you ?

And I've got a huge mic collection, that's why I was looking at this, 'cause I've got all sorts of big mics and **Big mics and small mics? What's the best, like, software device in the radio station?**

Well, we use one called NiceCast. And that's what we broadcast, we use NiceCast to broadcast. And then when we do the TV show over at Peralta College, you know Laney Colleges.

Oh yeah.

Yeah, it's over at Laney. Up in the big building with Laney on it. We're up on the top floor there where they've got the television studios. We use the big, the camera's like this big (demonstrating). It's this huge camera on this big rolling, yeah.

Oh. I know what you're talking about.

Yeah, we've got one of those and we have to build something in front of it every month for our TV show. That's what they have us do.

So how old were you when you moved to Alameda?

Um, 40?

Was it like this, how it is now?

Not as crowded. It's getting really crowded.

Were there tattoos back then?

Were there tattoos? Yeah. Tattoos go back to, what, the Japanese did tattoos hundreds of years ago. But, yeah, I think there was the one tattoo place way back then, down on Webster.

(other person in the room) Keep going.

She's looking for something special here.

Was it, um, are you looking for something specific?

No I'm looking for you to ask questions, to ask for more information

Was it stuff like this, stuff like GoPros. Oh was it Kick back then, like Kick, like on your phone. Did they have those big old phones back then?

What hellaphone, headphones you mean?

No phones, like car phone, telephone

Cell phones?

Uh huh.

What do you mean?

Like did they have cell phones back in South Africa?

No this was in the '70's.

So how did they used to, like, get in contact with people?

Just like here. You hold it and, no they have the same technology as us. But the culture's different. It's like, if you go over to England right now, they have the same technology. The same phones. The same companies are selling the same stuff everywhere. So it's the same thing there, but people use it kind of differently and um, you have, like, your accent.

Did you guys used to have parties or anything?

Where, in South Africa?

Uh huh.

Yeah, a little bit, but it was weird. It was, it was, uh, the high school there. The British idea of teaching. It was very different from ours.

Was it like?

Memorize things. We'll give you a test on Friday, and then forget it all and you'll memorize a new pile of stuff. We'll just keep moving on and. Besides that and sports there was not much else. And like, they did not have boys and girls going to the same schools so there weren't dances, there weren't, there wasn't any real mixing. You didn't really do that 'till, like, later. Like college.

Like when did they start letting people, like when did they start letting boys go to school with girls?

Well, that's all part of apartheid being torn apart. And how that all changed, and how astonishing that that was, 'cause we were sure, living there, that it was going to have to be bloody. Like a bloody revolution, to actually see, like, blacks get rights and not have slaves there and, uh. Yeah it was crazy. They would drive down, and we just lived in a regular neighborhood, and they'd drive around in these vans that look like, you know those vans for like dogs, you know with the like fencing on it, like that for people without their passes. And they'd stop black people and go "do you have your pass?" and if they, they weren't allowed to go anywhere without asking. It was, it's just brutal. It was very, very weird and like being there and not having come from that kind of culture, there was real culture shock. Like, oh I can't talk to him or have them as my friend, because you're a different race. They separated all the races. You had to live in different places. It was really weird.

Sounds, oo boy.

Yeah. And it slowly changed. Nobody liked it.

So what if you didn't have a pass?

You go to jail, until somebody who was responsible for you, came to get you. Or they send you back to your Township, which is sort of like what we call Reservations for Indians.

So what if nobody came to get you? Did you stay in jail forever?

They'd send you back to your home township, which would be your tribe. It would sort of be, like, different. Yeah, you'd have your tribe and they'd send you back to your tribe, or your homeship. Yeah, it was very, very strange. Fascinating history there.

So what happened if you talked to somebody who was a different race than yourself?

Yeah, you'd get in trouble. They'd tell you not to. 'Cause I was in high school, I wasn't an adult. So, you know, they'd come and yell at you like "Don't do that! You're not allowed to". They'd yell at the other kid too, "Go away. Where are you supposed to be?"

Have you ever got in trouble for doing it?

(Laughs) yes. Many, many, many, many times. I got in trouble so many times. My parents got in trouble because of me so many times. I didn't understand it. And, uh, turns out I was right. It wasn't good. The rest of the world agrees, like, slavery's not really a good thing to do. Yeah, it was very, very weird how they, you know, would decide. And it's hard for you to believe that right?

No, I could believe it. I just would not want to live back in that day.

No. And that's not that far back though.

(other person in room) yeah, it's what like, 12

40 years. 40 years ago. Yeah, like 35, 40 years ago. And it all changed there. And it was mainly because places like this, we fought for it. You know, when they talk about doing sanctions against bad countries. That helped a lot. Um. Everything. But it was also like the British and the like there was two main groups of people who lived there, besides the blacks. The blacks who lived there, and owned everything, were not the ones given the choice, though, of what happened. It was the British that had come in and it was the Dutch that had come in. and they fought. And eventually, the British sort of decided, like, we can't do this anymore.

Was it gay people back in the day, like?

No. no, even more repressive. They were there, well then again, I was in high school and. I don't know if I really want to go too much into the whole, like, the high schools and the teachers and the British, the British, yeah.

Yeah, I'm.

Yeah, you know what I mean. This could very easily slip into. The British have a different way of raising boys.

Did they used to have the rulers back then?

Oh yes. You put your hand over the edge and they'd come if, and if you didn't do your homework, they'd come by and smack your hand with a ruler. If you didn't do your homework. You do your homework every day.

They can't do that now though.

Yeah. We had teachers that had like a hook on the corner of the room. That if you made them upset, they'd pick you up and hand you on the hook.

What? They could hang you?

They could hit you if they wanted to back then. I had teachers come up and hit you.

Like (demonstrating), oh I'd be mad.

Yes, like slap you. Oh yeah, I got sent to. I got kicked out of one. I got in trouble a lot because of this again. I actually got kicked out of one school, because I would not let the Headmaster take my pants down and cane me. So. Yeah.

There you go, you got it on your shoe correctly. That's what you call that little plate there. So yeah, South Africa was weird. It's a beautiful place and I would love to go visit it now that it's, you know, normalized

like between the races and all that, but yeah it's, and it's not that different in parts of this country too. So, it's a fight we got to keep fighting.

Like did you, like, did you used to ride like a bike or a scooter?

Uh huh. Yeah I rode bicycles.

Big ones.

I don't like riding skateboards. Too hard

Too much work. Do you ever go down to the park there?

Skate park in Alameda?

Yeah, the one at the base.

Oh.

I thought that was really great when that got built by everybody that wanted it.

(unintelligible)

The people that wanted a skate park raised the money for that.

Yeah.

Yeah. And then went out there. It was pretty amazing watching all these parents go out there. And they built that thing. The City did some kind of deal and turned over that little bit of property and they built a skate park.

(other person in the room) What about the animals? He worked on an animal reserve.

You worked on an animal reserve?

Yeah.

What about the animals?

That was great.

What kind of animals?

Zebras and Gazelles and lots of little furry things. Um, lions. We would actually go out at night, well go out during the day, and find food for it. You know, we'd have to, if there was something sick or something like that, we would shoot it and bring it back. And we'd hang it from a tree.

You would, you could, you shot it with a gun?

No, not the lions. We would shoot like an antelope or something like that, 'cause that's what they eat. We would shoot it. We would hang it up at night. We would watch the mother lions come out with their cubs and eat them.

Was it cool?

That was so neat. That was so neat. Nature's very nasty, but nature is also the most amazing thing. It really is. So, yeah, it would be that and I would help, like, they had some cheetahs there.

Cheetahs? Oh they're really fast.

Little baby cheetahs. Yeah. The little fast. And they were very strange cats, they, very, somewhere between cats and dogs. Very, very weird animals, but very, very friendly.

I wonder why they call them cats and not dogs if they have the same features.

Well, they're closer to cats.

'Cause they can survive in the wild?

Yeah, and they've got retractable claws, and there's a few things that make them, they're obviously cats. But they were really friendly, that was the thing. They were just like big housecats. Like, you would never trust the lions to do that no matter how long you were around them. But the cheetahs, all of a sudden you would realize oh, it a big housecat, that can run 60 miles an hour.

Faster than the car.

Uh huh. Certainly where they were running, too, 'cause it would be all bumpy, you know, out in the fields.

So.

So, what else. Elephants, a few elephants. The elephants were funny, 'cause they, like, learned to turn on the hoses. So they'd get them some water, like that, but they'd never turn them off again.

So you had to turn them off. Did they ever get in trouble for that?

Try and get angry at an elephant. It's not going to do much good. But they were, you know. 'Cause it would be herds and they'd be working their way around the savannah and eventually they'd come through your area, you know.

Where else did you work at?

What do you mean work at?

What else, like, cool stuff did you work at? (unintelligible) at the animal thingy?

Oh with the animals? Well, we got to drive, drive around in the bush a lot and sleep out in the bush. And sleep up in trees, make like a

You did?

Yeah.

Was it cold?

Not too much.

Oh.

(conversation between interviewers – other person leaving the room)

Um, have you, what's the first car you ever driven?

The first car I ever drove. I, I, well you may, you've probably seen my car. I have, like, that really old Volkswagen Bug. That gray one with no paint on it. And that's like the first car I ever had, too, was an old Volkswagen Bugs. Like when I was in high school, we would buy, like, beat up ones and, like 'cause you could buy them for two or three hundred dollars, and fix them up and sell them for a couple thousand. And that's how I'd pay for,

Dang. That's like,

Yeah, that's how I would buy like records and music and all that stuff, was like fixing up cars. Volkswagens, those old beetles and the vans. I still like those, they're fun 'cause they've got these weird engines.

What's your favorite car, instead of a Beetle, that you would want?

That I would want? One of those vans.

A van, like?

You know, no, you know those hippy vans, those Volkswagen vans, those old ones? Those go for like, \$200,000.

For what?

If they're in pristine shape. People love those vans and they've gone, like, through the roof. I could never afford one. 'Cause they're so much more expensive than when they were new.

What, like you could sleep in 'em and hecka stuff huh?

Uh huh. Yeah, they're got like the campers with the stove and everything. Yeah we like doing that.

Like a RV?

Yeah, they're like little tiny RV's with the pop-top roof and everything. We do that when we go to Germany every couple of years.

I want a RV.

Uh huh. Yeah, look for used ones, they're cheap. But yeah, we go to Europe every couple of years. We rent a camper. And we drive around Europe. That's so much fun. Going to Europe. Save your money and go to Europe. Go see other countries. Experience things.

Have you ever been to an amusement park?

Yeah.

Like on a roller coaster?

Yeah.

Was it fun?

Yeah.

Santa Cruz, you ever been down there?

I been there before. I had a good time.

To the Boardwalk? Yeah I used to live not too far from that. So we used to go, and I had friends that worked there. So we'd go there at night, and they were about to close, and the track would get wet, so it would get even faster. A little bit faster. That wooden one. Yeah.

Oh that wooden one?

The wooden one. That scary wooden one.

Have you ever been on the haunted house one?

Yeah, yeah.

I've been on that one too.

And they've got that great big video arcade.

I never been in the arcade, but I like the food there. I saw the arcade, but I just never. I just like the roller coasters more.

Uh huh. There's like three of them there now.

They do.

Yeah.

I thought, like, Santa Cruz burnt down, or I forget what happened to it. I don't know if it was Santa Cruz or somewhere else.

Santa Cruz is ok. They had that big earthquake, but we had it here too.

Um, have you ever been to Great America? I like that.

Yeah, it gets so crowded though.

Drop zone.

It gets so crowded though. It's like Disneyland. You wait two hours to get on a two-minute ride.

Yeah. Yes. And the whole day, it starts at, like, it starts, it opens at 10 and it ends at 7.

Is it that late?

That's four rides, that's four rides.

Yeah, you get like four or five good rides, otherwise

Yeah. Um, do you know when daylight savings is?

No. why?

Because I don't like when it gets dark fast, 'cause then I have to go in the house.

Well. Oh really? Every day it's four minutes more. It keeps shifting a little bit more because of the elliptical orbit.

Did you see? I'm gonna stop this.

Ok. Oh he's done.

(end of tape)

D.J. AGNEW

Interviewed by David Coyle and Theo Wismar

So, um, what does D.J. stand for?

Donna Jean. I was born in the South and it's not unusual to have two names that are used in conversation.

And um, when did you move to Alameda, and what was it like when you moved here?

Oh boy. I moved here, I moved to Alameda not so long ago. In 1999. And, um, they were still wondering what to do about the base property. That hasn't changed. Um. There were fewer new houses being developed, so it was more a settled community, or at least to me it seemed settled. I moved from Miami to Oakland, to north Oakland, in 1968. So I've been out here longer than I grew up. So this is now home, for sure. And I lived in north Oakland, thinking that I would stay there permanently until I started having trouble walking and I knew I had to get a flat community. And that's what brought me to Alameda.

And what's been your favorite part of living in Alameda?

Oh, the 25 mile and hour speed limit. For me that's really important. And it's a safe community. And shopping is nearby. And, if there's no problem with the wheelchair, I can go to the library. I can go wherever I want.

And, um, do you currently have family? And, if you do, where do they live?

I have a sister in North Carolina. It was about two and a half hours north of Atlanta. And she raised her family in Atlanta. So her daughter stayed there, and she went up to North Carolina to live in a house that she and her husband had physically built themselves. Pretty impressive, huh?

That is pretty impressive.

And she has a son and he's in North Dakota. He likes the cold. Silly boy.

My brother loves the cold.

Oh yeah? Some people are more hot blooded than others, I think. He's an engineer up there and his sister is a teacher in Atlanta. That's what they're doing now.

I'm not sure if you mentioned this. You mentioned that you lived South, but where did your family live before Miami?

My father was a Georgia boy. He lived, he was born in Waycross, Georgia. In southern Georgia. My mother's family came down, when she was about three, came down to Miami from Minnesota. A little farming town called Cokato. Nobody, or Hutchison, that's nearby. It's a bigger town nearby. So

And what was it like to live in Miami as a child?

Oh it was great. There was, there were small retaining walls leading up onto the bay. Some places there were not so you just played among the mangrove trees, the mangrove swamps. It was not very developed, now it's enormously developed. My family, let's see, my mothers. My mother was raised in the house that, eventually, we moved into. And my father spent I don't know how many hours, remodeling it. Adding new power and plumbing and everything. So she was still in the same house she grew up in.

Dang.

Yeah, that's pretty stable isn't it?

And, have you been back to Miami?

I can't remember what year it was. I used to go back every year. For a long time I did my shopping back there, 'cause I'd do the stores. And, uh, let me guess, it might have been. Well, let me think about that. I'd have to think about that to get to it. Um. Maybe 10 years after I lived out here, I was still going back almost every year. And then it got to be Christmas. And then sometimes I'd miss a Christmas and piece by piece I stayed more out here.

And, um how does it compare to Alameda? How does Miami compare to Alameda?

Oh boy, now or then?

You can do then and now.

Well, I don't know how I could compare it. Miami, when we were growing up, we were just out on the streets by ourselves perfectly safe and I don't think that's true in Alameda.

No it's not.

Right. So it was a great place to grow up in. right near the water. Could go tromping around and not get into any real trouble. Once we learned to swim, handle fire.

If you wrote a book about your life, like your entire life, what would be the most memorable chapter?

What a shock it was to go from really healthy, really agile, really independent to getting MS. That was the big shock of my life. It's changed everything. Now I'm more dependent on people and I don't like it one bit, still. It's hard to ask for help. Um, I stay as independent as I can and I have aides to help me and they're very good about that. They know the difference between doing what I can't do and overdoing so that I get frustrated or angry. Um, but there's less that I can do as each year goes by. So getting accustomed to that has been the biggest surprise. And nobody knows how it's going to affect them.

I was just, looking back, very fortunate that my spending habits were meager when I had an income and I maintained a savings account. And I let it grow for a good retirement. Look what the retirement is now. It's not only retirement, regular retirement, but not the travel that I used to do, it's the medical costs that I have to pay. Very good question.

And, um, to you, who was the most important person in your life?

Right now, right this minute?

Overall.

Overall. Maybe it was my mother. I still feel her influence. My husband. I still feel his influence. It was great years together. There are many people over the years that were really important to me. I can't pick one person.

And what lessons from your life, would you give to kids today?

Enjoy where you are. Plan for financial unknowns. Save early. Enjoy what you're doing now. Stay here now. You've asked some very good questions.

Thank you.

Make me think pretty hard. So, what age and what school do you go to?

I go to Encinal High School.

Uh huh, and what level are you?

I'm a freshman.

Great, you've got a couple more years. Are you active in, what kinds of after school activities?

I do water polo and I'm starting track.

Water polo. Wow that was something we played, but it wasn't a recognized sport when we played it.

It is now.

Like, beach volleyball was not a recognized sport, but we played it.

Yeah, they play it now as a recognized sport.

And you're going into track. That sounds like fun.

I hope it is.

What kind of track?

Probably sprinting.

Oh, fast hard running. Well best wishes to you.

Thanks.

So you're a civil service social worker? That was your occupation?

Civil service was my whole career. At first I was a social worker, right out of college and right up until about 1974. And then I moved into financial analysis, which is a big shift. You never know where you're going to go in life. And after that I found that I really liked general administration better, not just limited into financial. so I moved into general administration. In public health, then in the courts, then in the judicial council of California. And that's the court system, both trial courts and appellate courts in California. And I did that a long time, maybe 15 years.

Whoa. I'm 15.

Are you? Well, look ahead, you never know what's gonna be next. You've got everything spread out in front of you. I guess one of the most important things I ever heard was from a book. And it was to examine

every path you're gonna take. And if it has a heart, take it. And if it doesn't, it's going to be a mistake. Maybe not then, but later on.

Um, do you have any questions?

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

I'm really glad to be participating in this, in this program. I think it's just a special idea. And I'm glad to have you boys working with the program. I'm glad to have met you.

Thanks you for participating.

Yes, thank you for participating.

Indeed. It was my pleasure.

MEL POTTERS

Interviewed by Theo Wismar and David Coyle

So when did you move to Alameda?

In Feb. 2001.

Why'd you move?

Because they, uh, were working on an apartment I was living in in Oakland and renovating it and I had to leave. I had to find a place to live. So luckily I found this apartment in Alameda, that my landlord owned, and I've been there ever since.

Did you always live in Oakland?

No. I was born in New Jersey. I lived there until, until I graduated college in 1972. Then I moved to California. Wound up in Oakland.

How was New Jersey? Was it fun?

Yeah, with the snow and sleigh riding, Little League, Boy Scouts. It was kind of fun. It was a small town called Cedar Grove, New Jersey.

Um, how is it different that it is today, in New Jersey?

I haven't been back, but I think they have a lot of new things, you know. That was before there were computers and, they had big computers, before they had CD's and before they had a lot of modern things. So, it was semi, not rural, semi suburban town so it's advanced a lot, I think.

Did you have a TV or a radio?

Yeah, we had a, first we had an old black and white TV when we moved there. Then we got a color TV. The not, the old analog TV's. And I watched it in between doing my schoolwork. And, see, we used to do things like, ah let's see, we rode, I wasn't very good with bikes, but we rode by the freeway to this drive-in. It was a little scary riding by the freeway. Did little things to break things up, make things more interesting.

Why'd you leave New Jersey?

Well, after I graduated college in 1972, I didn't see much happening for me in New Jersey. I didn't see many opportunities. And the weather, like I say, I got tired of the cold in the winter and the hot weather in the summer, so a friend of mine lived in the Berkeley and Oakland area and he told me about it. So I decided to try out California.

Where did you go to college?

(conversation between interviewers)

Ok. Ok is it? Ok. So where did you go to college?

I went to a school called Bloomfield College. It was a, it was a Presbyterian seminary, you know, for ministers, and then it became a college and I went there. I majored in history and a philosophy minor.

Why did you major in history and philosophy?

Well there are two. First of all, I was kind of, not a very energetic, I was kind of a bit of a lazy person so it was easier. History was easy for me. And the other. And I liked it. And the other subjects like math and science, I wasn't very good at. And I had to pick something, so I picked history. But it was alright. It was just a general degree, we couldn't specialize, so I had Roman, Greek, Russian history, Asian history, U.S. history, African history. You name it, I had all kinds of history. I mean, with a history major, you really can't do much with it. You can teach. You can go on and get a Masters. I never did that degree. Maybe and try to go on and teach in the university. Get a PhD and write some books. I didn't do any of that, so anyway.

So is Bloomfield College in New Jersey?

It's in the same town, with the same name, Bloomfield. Like Alameda College. Yep.

Did you do any other schoolwork when you came to Oakland?

I didn't do much for a while, well I guess I didn't. Well, what I did is, I went to the junior college here. It was called Vista or East Bay. It's in Berkeley somewhere. Like Alameda. And I thought I might try travel, so I took a few travel agency courses. But travel (unknown noise in the room). What was that?

When you moved to Alameda, what were your first impressions of it?

When I moved here. I'd been here before in the '70's and I never lived here, but my impressions then were. The base was here, the Navy base which is closed down. So I didn't know this part of Alameda, I knew the other side, Webster. And there were a lot of bars and I was already old enough to go there. Not that a bars a good place, but a lot of Navy people would go and drink. Some people would get drunk and not really a good idea. So, what, when I moved here in 2001, this part of Alameda. I kind of liked it. It was quieter. They had some nice shops and, um, it seemed like a safe place to be. Pretty nice people. And also by then they were getting people from other countries, from all over the world. It's like a little melting pot, you know, say like Berkeley is. Or San Francisco on a smaller version. So I liked it and it's gone through a lot of changes since then. More stores. More housing for low and upper income. I guess overall it's good. Some people criticize change, but I think change is basically good; if it's positive change.

How else has Alameda changed? You said there are new stores, but is there anything,

Oh, you mean, today. There's more. Maybe I didn't realize it then, more art galleries. You know, uh, art shows. For people that are artists, they can go to these, join these art galleries and do their art. And I think the people in the gallery help them, because you know, it's expensive to have an art show. And they help one another, artists. And maybe musicians too. They probably have stuff for musical and the other arts like drama. Uh, the plays they do at the high school and other. So uh, it has an art scene which is good. We have sports things for people who like sports. The baseball teams and softball for adults. I think they still have that. Yeah that's basically some of the changes.

When you first moved to Oakland, how were Oakland and Alameda different?

Oh, well, when I first moved to Oakland. Alameda has always been known as a safer place. Oakland has that reputation of not being safe, but I think it depends on what neighborhood. I wound up in, wound up in um, I would say North Oakland by Shattuck and Alcatraz. Kind of a so, so area, but maybe, you could walk around at night, but sometimes there was trouble. Then I moved near the Merritt Restaurant, East 18th. That area was not too good. Uh, what's that, East 18th Street and 2nd of 3rd Avenue? But even that area's gotten better. But Oakland had a lot of troubled areas. And um, and then I moved to the Temescal part of Oakland and I lived there, before I moved to Alameda. I'd say I lived there from '83 to 2001. I felt pretty safe there. That's a good area. I was close to Berkeley. Transportation, go to San Francisco and other parts of, Rockridge, Piedmont so I kind of liked that part of Oakland. But uh, yeah when I first moved to Oakland it was kind of, uh, you know kind of mixed areas you know.

What's been your favorite part of living in the Bay Area?

I think, uh, going to films. Going to the museums. I did that early on, you know, going to San Francisco and going to the DeYoung and the Asian Art Museum and the Modern Art Museum. Even the Oakland Museum and the University of Berkeley, Berkeley University Art Museum. Going to the artistic things and some musical things. And also, say, going to Tilden Park, going to Mt. Tamalpais. Going to, well going to Santa Cruz, but that's not really the Bay Area any more. You know Northern California, Marin County. Nature places. I guess that would be my favorite part.

Were there any big differences between New Jersey and the Bay Area?

Initially one was. Initially people seemed friendlier in the Bay Area, uh, but later on I met people at work. So friendly, it's just like anywhere else. Uh, where New Jersey, it was small towns, so it was harder to get around for one thing. I lived in a small, you know they didn't have a good bus or tr, or like a BART system. So you had to depend on people to drive you around. Unless you drove, and I never drove. I had a friend who would take me around to different areas, so it was easier to get around here in Northern California, in the Bay Area. So that's a big difference. Those are some of the big, uh, yeah those are some of the big differences.

Do you have any family in Alameda?

No, I don't have any family, but being that this town is small, it's growing, I have a lot of friends or people I know in the past 14 or 15 years. And sometimes they feel like family. Yeah, my family's basically in New Jersey. Two brothers, a nephew, a sister-in-law and some cousins. I don't really know them. I mean I haven't seen them since we were all the same age like in high school, junior high school. Yeah, so uh, so my friends are sort of like family in a way.

Did you ever serve in any wars?

No I didn't. I know I wear a lot of this military stuff, 'cause I like wearing it. And I like reading about the war, WWII. Not that I like war, but. So from my father and my uncles talking about being in WWII, I had an interest in it, just as history. But I never served. I could have, of course Vietnam was going on when I was in college, so I could have been drafted. But thankfully, for me, I wasn't 'cause I didn't really look forward to having to be in a war. I don't think anybody does.

Do you remember anything in particular about the Vietnam War?

Yes I do. I remember some friends, well they were high school mates, who some joined, some got drafted. I think I heard later that a couple didn't make it back, you know. People get shot in wars and some don't make it back. I also remember, because that's when the first peace protests. They have these protests now, but I thing during the war, the first ones that I know against the war, were going on. And I remember going to Washington, but I wasn't really in the peace protests much, but I had a friend who was in the Navy. And he got out and he said, "Let's go to Washington and see the protests", and I said "ah, I don't think I want to go" because, you know it could be dangerous. Some people all they want's to face the police and the National Guard. And that really wasn't for me. And we saw a lot of the Hippie type generation there and we saw protesters and, you know, people turned over buses. And I told a friend of mine who was going to go around the buses, "you better not because if you go past there, that's where the White House was, you'll probably get tear gassed." And I said, "That's not for me". So I didn't do that, but I went to the march, to the protest anyway. Nothing happened to me bad, so I remember that about the war. And I remember Kent State. I mean I wasn't there, but I remember reading about it. Where they had student protests in Ohio and unfortunately some students who weren't involved in the protest, weren't throwing stones, got killed because the National Guard used real bullets. And they weren't supposed to. So that was kind of sad. I mean maybe they didn't know, maybe they didn't know they were real bullets. So I don't know if I could blame the soldiers, the people who loaded the weapons. I don't know, it was pretty sad all the way around for everybody. And I remember that about the war.

Do you remember anything else about the Bay Area in the 80's or 70's?

Yeah. Yeah, what do I remember about that? Yeah, I remember when I first came, they had the farmworkers, the UFW. Caesar Chavez was still alive and they were still protesting to get unions for the farmworkers. You know unionize, union grapes and lettuce. I guess they don't have those protests now, I guess the farmers. They probably don't get everything they want, but it's better than it was. I remember that.

Uh, the Black Panthers were still around. I guess they're still around. But they had the SLA and Patricia Hearst. I was around for that, when she got kidnapped and the shootout in L.A. and that group. A lot of, a lot of, kind of, I consider it negative stuff. Maybe the people involved in it thought it was positive. But, of course, I wasn't involved in those things. So a lot of, a lot of change, you know. Racial strife. Negative stuff and probably positive stuff too. I'm trying to think what else I remember. Well, at that time I had friends that drank, so we went to bars and things like that. Which I knew, after a while, I knew it wasn't a good thing for me, so as I stopped seeing them I, on my own, stopped doing it. I just went because they were my friends. For the most part I didn't get drunk, but I just kind of knew drinking isn't good. Maybe if you drink a glass of wine with your food, if you're of age. I guess that's ok. Or beer. I remember that.

I remember drugs. I hate to say it, but I guess I might as well. You know the marijuana thing, which is still around today and other drugs. But I had to get away from people who were doing that because they'll basically bring you down. I don't think that's a good idea even at any time. So.

You described yourself as an ordinary person. What does that mean to you?

Yes. Oh, well um. I did say that didn't I? Or average person. Well, maybe what I meant is when I was in school, or even today, of course I didn't do any great accomplishments great, I mean I've done a few things. Because in school I was an average student. I didn't do a lot of sports. I didn't get involved in a lot of activities. I was kind of a shy person then, but as I grew up I got a little more outgoing. But I don't know. Just kind of, not uh, what's the word I'm looking for. More an introvert than an extrovert. I don't know if that's ordinary, but that's probably what I meant.

What advice would you give young people today?

Well, I would say, probably stay in school. If you can, go to school and get your degree. But if that's not for you, enter a trade. Do something with your hands if you can or enter arts or music, the arts. Or, do something that you like to do, but do something that you can probably support yourself with, make a living. That would be a good idea. I think I kinda made that mistake, but that's ok. I, it was my life, life's not over yet either. But, um, yeah, that's what I would tell young people.

Did anyone give you advice when you were young?

Yeah, you know in high school they have Guidance Counsellors. Maybe they do in elementary school to, I suppose, I'm not sure. And they would tell you, a lot of them were pushing college 'cause that was the big thing. Go to college and, if you can, and that's what I did. That's the path I chose. I guess they told me to, you know, try and stay out of trouble. And I say, for the most part I did. And I did my studies. I think that's the kind of advice they gave me at school and at home.

You also say you want to share your story to help people avoid pitfalls in life, so what kind of pitfalls did you avoid, or.

Well I, of course some I didn't. That's what. Like I say, I hung around some people, they were my friends but later on they got involved in some drugs so that's the kind of pitfall. I never considered myself a drug addict, but I was around people that were, they were probably addicted to drugs, marijuana and some drinking. But for some reason, I don't know, the grace of God if you believe in it, I didn't get addicted to, uh. I don't know why. Maybe my, uh what's the word, my uh I guess I didn't have an addictive personality. I guess there's such a thing as that. And maybe that's what saved me. But I would tell people to stay away from people doing those things if you can.

Is there anything else you want to say?

I would just say it's a pleasure helping you and the other young people in the group. And young people whatever little I can help people by talking about myself, I have been glad to do it, or am glad to do it. And I thank you for that, yeah.

David, do you have anything to ask?

No.

Ok. Thanks for being interviewed.

ROBERT BLANCHARD

Interviewed by Jayden Guerrero and Izabella Rios

What was one of your biggest successes in working?

Well I guess one of my biggest successes is that I worked for the same company for 35 years. I started there when I was going to college and I needed a part time job and they hired me until I graduated. And they hired me and I worked there for 35 years.

Did you find it difficult, working there for 35 years?

Not at all. It was a joy. I enjoyed my work. I enjoyed the company I worked for and it was a great experience.

What kind of songs did they play back when you were a kid?

Well, when I was a kid, I was born in 1943 and that was right during WWII. I don't remember much of the war because I was too young. They had the big bands then, Glen Miller and people like that. The big band era where they played a lot of dance music and vocals. When I grew up it was the beginning of rock and roll, Elvis Presley. Eventually in the 60s came the Beatles. So there was just a great deal of different kinds of music that were coming on scene when I was growing up and I liked all of it.

Did you ever go to any of the concerts or meet any in person?

I think we went to, I wasn't really a concert goer. I just really liked the music and didn't have any great desire to go and see a concert. I think I went to a couple, but can't think what they were.

What do you say was your favorite growing up in music out of all that you probably like listened to?

I kind of probably liked Frank Sinatra. He was great. My mother was a great fan of Frank Sinatra. She grew up in that era and she had all of his albums so when I was growing up at home my mom played a lot of Frank Sinatra and I grew attached to it. I liked the Beatles um. I liked all the rock n roll that was going on. I liked Elvis Presley, just liked everybody. I like all kinds of music, but those are the ones I liked best when I was growing up.

What kind of books do you read?

I would say mostly non-fiction. I like historical books. I like books on the wars, WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War and uh mostly I was more interested in non-fiction, in other words what really happened. When you read some books that are fiction, it isn't exactly the truth. It may be similar to what happened, but I wanted to learn more about the historical parts of reading and that's why I picked those kind of books 'cause I wanted to learn more about history.

What did you learn from it?

I learned that it repeats itself. Sometimes we make mistakes and we do things that we shouldn't do. Mans inhumanity to man and we tend to repeat that over the history of the world and that's probably the biggest, that we have not learned to stop making the same mistakes over and over. That's the biggest thing that sticks with me.

On the paper it says that you have five generations of golfers in your family. Are you one of them?

Yes. My grandfather was a golfer, my father was a golfer, I was a golfer, our daughters were golfers and now our grandsons are golfers and they all play at Alameda. Our grandsons right now are involved in the junior golf program. It's a wonderful program for kids that want to learn the sport and it's a great sport to learn. You meet a lot of friends. You learn about etiquette, how to conduct yourself around adults, how to behave on the golf course. You learn about rules. When you play golf you have to play by the rules. And it's all a matter of integrity so you want to make sure you're honest. You wright down the right score, you penalize yourself when you make a penalty. It's a great sport.

Out of every sport growing up because of your older siblings that played golf, would you say that's why you did it? Or is it 'cause you wanted to? Or you looked up to them.

Well I think what happened is that, you get the bug. It's like baseball or basketball. When you go to the park and you start playing, you like the game and you like the sport. And when you like the sport you want to play it more. And I played baseball, basketball, football in grade school. I didn't play much football 'cause I wasn't big enough to play in high school, but I did play golf and I played baseball and I lettered in

those sports in high school. It's just getting exposed to these different sports and then once you get exposed to them and you participate a lot of times you get attached to them and you enjoy them and you go back and want to play it some more.

What age did you start playing golf at?

I was 5 years old. So I was pretty young. But my dad played golf and my godfather played golf and what I would do is I would go out and I would caddy for them when they were playing golf or I would just walk around with them while they were playing golf and I was watching it and occasionally they would let me hit a golf ball and that's how it all started. But I've been playing golf now for over 65 years. I'm still playing golf. I love the game. It's a fun game. It's good exercise and it teaches you to concentrate on every shot you hit to make it the best possible shot you can make. So it's a good sport. I like it. I'd recommend it to any of you. They have a wonderful junior golf program here at Alameda, out the golf course. You can take lessons, they're free and then once you get your lessons and you start playing, they only charge you \$1 to play golf at Alameda which is a real fair thing. And that started a long time ago. When I was a little kid they only charged just \$1. And they're still doing it to this day. They believe that at the reason for that is that you're the next generation of golfers in Alameda so we want to make sure you enjoy it and get hooked and want to play too.

Was it hard for you to learn in school?

Well, let's see I guess my biggest difficulty was. Well I took algebra in high school and struggled with that then I went on to geometry and I struggled with that and then I just didn't realize that I wasn't college material, because you have to have those subject matters to go on to college. So I reverted back to a business curriculum and learned business math and things like that. At the time I just found it very difficult to understand algebra and geometry and trigonometry and calculus and all these things. They have, they're just very difficult subjects. But there are kids who get it and when they get it it's easy. You just have to concentrate and work at it. Nothing comes easy, you've gotta work for it.

Growing up, what would you say was your best experience growing up?

Oh, I guess my best experience was just growing up. It's just, it's part of life, when you're growing up. When you're born and your mother and father nurture you and you get old enough that you're able to get out on your own, so to speak, and do a lot of things and that was always a wonderful experience to explore and see new things and meet new friends and make new friends. It was a great experience growing up to have all of those experiences. And when you've had all those experiences, things change over the years and then when you get older, those things that you experienced when you were younger are much different than what children of your age experience. You have technology now, we didn't have technology then. I mean you have computers, and cell phones and IMax and iPads and iPhones and all of that. We didn't have any of that. We just had a, in fact, we were the, when, we got our first television in 1947. I was only 4 years old when that came.

We were one of the first families on our street to get a television. And that was a big deal, because all the kids from the neighborhood came over to our house and we all sat in the front room and watched television. You take for granted television now, it's just one of those things. You can watch television on a little thing like that. We had a great big screen, I mean it was not a great big screen, it was a great big box and in it was a little screen and it's just changed dramatically.

And you're going to be a lot smarter and a lot more intelligent when it comes to technology because you're growing up in that. It's like our children and our grandchildren, especially our grandchildren. We have grandchildren that range from 16 years of age down to 3 years of age and they're right in the middle of this technology, so whenever I have a problem with anything I call up my grandchildren or I call up my daughters and say "I'm having this trouble 'cause I don't understand it" and they walk up and it's fixed. And I couldn't figure it out. It's just the way it is. It's just. So you're lucky in that regard because you're going to get to learn a lot of technology. And this country and the world is just growing by leaps and bounds so you're going to see things that... when I was younger and they talked about a man going to the moon, it was like what! A man going to the moon? Well it happened and we witnessed it. But in those days there was nothing like that. So it's kind of interesting.

While growing up, who would you say is the most person that helped you? One person that you looked up to the most while growing up?

Well I looked up to my mother, and I looked up to my father and I looked up to my god-father. Those were probably the three most important people in my life as I was growing up. But then I met other people, older people, who were similar to my parents' age that I looked up to also.

And I looked up to role models. Always looked at people that were good people that, set a good example, and I tried to follow those examples. It's very important as a youngster that you pick out good role models, people that behave themselves, that are very giving of themselves and very knowledgeable and they share that knowledge and that experience with you because those are the people that really matter in your lives. The people that are in trouble or causing problems or whatever, those are the people you don't want to look to. You want to look to the people that are doing great things in the world, even in your community. It doesn't have to be the world. It can be just your neighbor down the street, or a friend or a person at school. Or a person or a friend at church. Or whatever it is, those are the people that you want to look up to because those are the ones who will help guide you through life and make your life a better more enriching experience.

What kind of things did you like as a kid?

Well, what did I like as a kid? Well let's see, I used to love, and I still do, ice cream. We used to go to Tuckers. You've heard of Tuckers Ice Cream? Well Tuckers Ice Cream used to be on Park Street, but it was down at the corner of Web Avenue and Park Street and, um, it was there for years. But I remember on Saturday night we would go down, my dad and I, would get some Rocky Road ice cream, my favorite, our favorite, ice cream. And that was a big treat. So, I liked ice cream.

I liked baseball, I played a lot of baseball growing up. And I played a lot of golf.

And, uh, I like to take trips. I like to go see things. Get in the car and drive around and see things. I didn't do too much of that growing up, but I've managed to do a lot of those things now with both our children and my wife and I and our grandchildren. So we take a lot of trips and go see things. Trying to go see all the National Parks in the United States. Have you ever been to any of the National Parks in the United States? Yellowstone or Yosemite? Those are all places you want to see some day. You can watch it on television, or on those travelogue programs on television, and they're nice and they tell you a lot and show you a lot about it, but you have to experience these things in person. 'Cause it's, when you look at it you say "how did this happen. How could this beautiful thing happen?" So it raises questions in your mind about wow, how did this all come about? 'Cause it's so beautiful, so.

How long did you live in Alameda?

Well I was born in the Alameda hospital in August 16, 1943. That's a long time ago. That's like over 71 years ago. I'm 71 now. I turned 71 last August. So that's 71 years ago I was born in that hospital. And um, I was an only child. My mother had had several miscarriages, which means she wasn't able to deliver a baby. The baby passed away, for one reason or another, at childbirth. I think my mom had four or five births and I was the only one that survived of all of them. So I was pretty lucky to survive, 'cause my mother would have a lot of complications carrying the baby and then delivering it too. So I was the only child, I never had any brothers or sisters. And I was always sad about that, 'cause I grew up in a neighborhood with a lot of brothers and sisters and I always thought how neat it would be to have a brother or a sister and all I could do was invite friends over to spend the night and that was like a brother to me, or a sister. That's it.

Did you have a favorite friend?

A favorite friend? Yes I did. I had several. One that lived down on the corner. His name was Ron Perata. And when they moved into the neighborhood, they had just come from Italy, and he couldn't speak any English. And I would try to teach him English and he would always have difficulty understanding. But eventually he learned the English and he was fine. He was one of my best friends for a long, long time.

And just down the street and up another street was another friend, Bill Anderson, who I grew up with and we played a lot of baseball together. And another friend, Bob Blomberg, who lived around the block from us. And those three guys were primarily my best friends when I was growing up in the neighborhood. And you don't forget those friends.

Unfortunately, all three of those fellows are all passed away. And I've been to all their funerals. So I was sad that they passed away too soon. That's what happens sometimes they. I don't know why, but some people pass on before you do. But it's important to when you have friends, to nurture your relationship. When you have a friend, you want to make sure that you're good to him, and in turn he's good to you and you help each other and really be a true friend to him. And when they're having a tough time, or having problems, you want to help them to get through it. Just as if you were having a bad problem and he was to help you through it. So that's what friends are all about, just helping each other along the way.

What school did you go to?

Um, I went to, I started at Lincoln School. Now where Lincoln school is now isn't where I went to. It was Lincoln school on Central Avenue between Versailles, pardon me, between Mound Street, just off of Mound Street and Central and I can't think of the other street there. It was a great big school and it was built a long, long time ago. So I started there in Kindergarten.

And then Otis School was built. It was a smaller school. And you've heard of Otis School? We were the first class to go to Otis School and that was in 1940, right around, I think I started, I was 6 years old so that would make me, it was 1949 I think. I went to Lincoln school for kindergarten, then transferred to Otis school for the first grade through the fifth grade at Otis School and then I went to Lincoln school, back to Lincoln school, and then I did sixth, seventh and eighth at Lincoln school.

And then after I got out of school, I decided that I wanted to go into the military, 'cause I didn't really know what I wanted to do. And I thought, maybe if I go away for a few years I'll figure it out and by the time I figure it out I can come back and carry on with my life. So I enlisted in the Navy and I did two years active duty in the Navy.

I went to boot camp down in San Diego and then I got on board a ship in Long Beach and from Long Beach we sailed all the way across to Yokosuka, Japan. That's all the way across the Pacific Ocean to Japan. And we were a station ship in Yokosuka. And we spent, I spent the two years of my career in the Navy on that Destroyer, it was called a Destroyer ship. And, um in Yokosuka. And we sailed to Hong Kong, the Philippines, Taiwan, Korea, we sailed all over the Far East to all these different ports and I learned a lot about all these different nationalities.

And then I got out and then I enrolled in college, at Armstrong College in Berkeley. And I got a, I did a four year curriculum in three years' time, 'cause I went to summer school. I really hit the books hard and got through and graduated and that's when I went, I was working part time at that company that I worked for for 35 years.

And when I graduated they offered me a job as a marketing manager and I went to work for them for 35 years. And then I retired from there. And then I went to work for another company, a similar company, it was a competitor for 10 years. So 45 years I was in the metals distribution business. And that was basically a company that buys steel and aluminum from the mills. There's big large mills that make the steel and make the aluminum and they ship us in the raw material, that's sheets and plates and structurals and tubes and so forth. And we cut it and bend it and form it and everything and ship it to customers. So that's, we were in distribution business.

Since you said you were in the Navy, have you ever been on, like stayed on the Navy base in Alameda?

No, actually, um, I was on the naval Air Station, when I got out of the Service I was in the Reserves for about a year on the naval Air Station. I used to go down there one weekend a month. We would go down there for meetings. And that would be on a Saturday and a Sunday. And I did that for about a year and I fulfilled my duty as far as the Reserves and that was about the end of it. But I did go on the base from time to time.

When it was still like, um?

When it was an active Naval Air Station.

How was it? Was it like, were there people just walking around with guns? Like the Army people?

No it wasn't quite that severe. It was, you had civilian employees who helped run the base. Basically the purpose of the base was a re-work facility so, when an aircraft carrier came into the Naval Air Station in Alameda, prior to coming into the Golden Gate, coming under the Golden Gate, coming into Naval Air

Station Alameda, the planes would take off and they would land at the Naval Air Station. And those planes would go through overhaul. Which meant they'd take the engines out and they'd check the engines and fix them all up and put them back in the planes. They fixed them so they were all brand new, so to speak, overhauled.

And when the ship came in, they replenished the ship with supplies and things. So they would usually be in for maybe 6 months and then they'd turn around and go back out to the Far East or out to the Pacific Ocean somewhere, wherever the duty required it.

But there was a lot of civilian people who worked at the base and plus there was a lot of military people on the base. But it wasn't, there wasn't a lot of guns or anything. There was areas that were kind of security, that had to be kind of guarded, but other than that, it was, you could drive around without any problem.

But you had to get a pass. You had to go through the guard gate. You had to have the right documentation and then, they had all of that then they'd let you go through.

Have you been there recently?

Yes, I go there every Monday. I work for the Alameda Food Bank. I drive the van. And the van that's parked over by the Food Bank, do you know where the Food Bank is, the warehouse area? That's where I go every Monday morning. I pick up the van and drive it down to Safeway at Harbor Bay. I pick up all the groceries and things at Harbor Bay, then I go to South Shore and I pick up all the supplies there. And then I take them back to the warehouse and unload those and any perishable items, they go in the refrigerators or freezers and the other stuff we put in boxed for the next day's delivery.

Do you have any more questions? (asking other interviewer)

I guess that's all our questions.

Out of questions. Ok, that's it. Thank you. (tape ends)

STEVE DAVIS

Interviewed by Teddy Oliver and Dajah Peace

So, um, did you play any sports growing up?

Not really. I worked a lot, mowing lawns and stuff like that. I didn't play any sports in school at all. "Just tried to make money; help my family out.

Did you, like, like watching any sports?

Oh I loved, uh, watching football and baseball, a lot. The Raiders are my favorite football team and the Giants are my favorite baseball team. So I grew up with baseball and football. I just never had time to play it because there were six of us at home, so we all worked to pitch in.

How long did you live in California for?

I been here since 1955.

Do you have any older brothers or sisters?

Yes, I have, uh, three sisters and one brother. They're living in California. They live in Lake County and one of my brothers, I don't know where he's at. But we all live in California now.

Are you the youngest?

I'm the oldest.

Have you ever been out of California?

You mean as far as visiting, or living?

Uh, visiting.

Yes, I've been to Oregon a few times. I've been to Washington, just once, and that's about it. Been to Mexico a couple of times, but as far as other. Oh I take that back, I've been to Massachusetts too. I went to Boston.

What was the best memory you had as a kid?

Best memory I had as a kid. Probably when we used to. Basically, being a kid, it's always a blast because you have no responsibilities, but, uh, you guys know what cardboard cartons are right? Ok. Well, what we used to do was to get the cardboard cartons and go down a grassy hill. That was always fun. And, uh, pretty much just being a kid. Playing, you know, we played baseball during, in the neighborhood but I never played in school or anything. Just hanging out with friends was a lot of fun. That's pretty much what I remember the most.

What high school did you go to?

Hayward High.

Did you like it?

Yeah, I did like it. A lot. I mean it's, when you first go to high school, you're thinking "oh these big old monster kids and" but it wasn't that way. It just was pretty cool.

Um, did you ever get into a fight at school and stuff?

Yeah, I got into a few fights when in high school. I'm not one to look for trouble, but you know when you have a girlfriend, people say something stupid or smart and you, you got to show your honor I guess. But I, a few fights, but nothing really big.

What was your favorite subject in school?

I would probably say English. I liked to do English. And Math I'm not too good at, so I didn't really like that. And I was pretty, I enjoyed Science too.

Out of every job you've ever had, which one is your favorite?

The one I have now. I've been doing this since, uh. I make cardboard boxes and I've been doing that since 1969. I mean I did a few odd jobs growing up, but this has been the job I've had the most.

What's your favorite part about your job?

Working with people and the finished product when it's done. It's always pretty neat to look at what you've made with a machine and stuff.

Do you think your (Unintelligible) is better than other factories?

I don't know. We're pretty competitive out there, but I think we're probably all the same.

How old were you when you had your first job?

First job? Ah, I was like, we. Is that considered mowing lawns and stuff? Is that considered a job, or a real job?

A real job.

International House of Pancakes in Hayward. I was a busboy there in high school. That was my first paying job.

Have you ever had an injury? What was the worst?

I had a heart valve replaced six years ago and I had a knee rep, my kneecap replaced too, but the heart one was the worst because, at least if you have your knee replaced you can recover from that, but you're not so sure you will with a heart valve replaced. So, I had a major valve replaced in my heart.

Were there like any kids that you knew that were bad for you growing up, but you still liked hanging out with them?

Well, I've always been a pretty good judge of character and with the bad kids, we kind of stayed away. 'Cause we had our own little clique, you know. We were, I was born in the country. So we were kind of a bunch of farm boys hung out together. But as far as hanging out with the bad crowd? No because I, we didn't need that as kids. Especially the group we hung out in. we just liked to go out to dances and stuff and go to the beach.

So what was your scariest moment growing up as a kid?

Scariest moment growing up as a kid? Uh, Martin's Beach over here in Half Moon Bay? I almost drown and that was my scariest moment. I mean I was brought back to life, because I was drowning, but a gentleman came in and saved my life. That was my scariest moment of my life and I'd say I was 11 years old. That's the only time I've been that scared, other than the heart surgery.

Were your parents around, or just with your friends?

Uh, I was with, actually my mother and my step-father were up on the beach and they didn't even see me drowning. Some other person seen me, I guess trying to gasp for air or whatever, and they pulled me out. But my parents didn't even see it, but you know, that's the way it is.

So how long have you lived in Hayward?

I lived in Hayward from 1955 until, I'd say 16 years. And then I got married and moved to Fremont. And then my wife passed away after 41 years, so I moved to Richmond. Lived there for a couple of years and then I moved to Alameda, where I met Brenda, and we've been together for, like, 6 months now.

Do you live on this side of Alameda?

Yes. Actually we live down off of, right down the street on Park, by San Jose.

What was your favorite holiday?

Christmas. Still is. It's a big deal in our family and it's just the most magical time of the, holiday of the year I think. Other than your birthday, but you know, Christmas is something special.

What was your best present, or the most present you cherished as a kid?

A used bicycle. That I'll always remember, because it was my first bicycle and uh, everybody else got new bikes, but we got a used one. But still, it was a bicycle. That I'll never forget. But, you know, as you get older you get better gifts.

Were you into, like, the game systems and stuff?

We didn't have game systems when I was a kid. We just. I think Atari came out, well I was already been married for a while, but when I was a kid we didn't have uh, we didn't have anything like that.

Growing up, what was your favorite activity?

My favorite activity was to skateboard around. 'Cause, well our idea of a skateboard was a 2x4 with some skate wheels on it, 'cause that's all we had to do. That was our fun.

Have you ever had an accident like falling off the skateboard or bike maybe?

Yeah, actually fall, fell off a bicycle. I was on my way to get some gas for the lawnmower. Had stitches in my head. That, and then uh, you know tumbles and falls when you're little or a youngster, but.

What was your favorite place to eat?

Well, I'd say, there was a, it's called Bobo's and it used to be, you used to get, like, 7 or 8 hamburgers and a big box of fries for like \$1.50. That was the best place to eat then. And then as I got into high school, we had a little hangout called Compton's down in Hayward. That's where we always went after school. French Fries and gravy. You should try it sometime.

What was your favorite, like, Halloween costume?

Well we, uh, I don't really know. Dressed up like uh, hillbilly, you know, kind of paint your teeth so it looked like you're missing teeth and put freckles on and a straw hat and a corn cob pipe. That was pretty much what we had back then. So I don't know if it was my favorite, or just by choice.

What was your most difficult thing growing up? (unintelligible)

Dealing with my step-father. That was the most difficult thing.

How long did you have a step-father for?

Let's see. Twelve years and then I moved out.

Did you struggle in school or was it kinda just,

Well yes and no. I had a "C" average, so I guess if you want a struggle. I, I didn't study a lot like I should have. But, you know, back in my generation that's what we did. We went to school, but you didn't. Where we were from you didn't, you spent more time riding your skateboard.

When did you get your first car growing up?

1968. I was 18 years old and that was when I got my first car.

What kind of car was it?

It was a '59 Chevy. And then after that, a year later I got a Chevy Malibu. That was the hot car back then.

So when you got your first car, were you still in school?

No, I had graduated and my mother helped me buy it. My step-father didn't do anything, but I was working at the IHOP and that's how I paid for it.

How tall were you in high school?

I'd say 5'6", 5'5". Something like that. I've pretty much been this size forever, it seems like.

Did your friends play any sports?

No not really. The gang I hung out with, we never played sports. We always worked after school, mowing lawns and stuff like that. And working in the yards and stuff like that. It was pretty boring as a kid when we were growing up.

How much money did you make?

I used to make \$63 a week and that's pretty low. But, hell, back then it was twenty-five cents for gas so it was a piece of cake. All you had to do was really, and your car and stuff. And then I had a motorcycle too when I was growing up, 'cause we used to ride dirt bikes a lot. Ride dirt bikes.

Where did you guys ride dirt bikes at?

Uh, Redwood Road in Castro Valley. And then my grandfather and grandmother had a big bunch of property in Hayward Hills, and they used to own that and we used to go out there and ride all the time, too.

Who was the person that inspired you the most growing up?

I'd want to say my mother. My mother always protected us from everything. She was quite a leader.

Did you like school, or did you just.

I actually did like school. I liked the kids and everything and most of the teachers were pretty cool. But it was like, I knew school was important, but it's like anything else, kind of a drag sometimes. You can't wait 'til summer vacation.

What was your best summer memory?

Going to Santa Cruz a lot. That's pretty much, and hanging out by the water. Just was a lot of fun.

Have you ever been on a roller coaster before?

Oh yeah. All the time. The Big Dipper and all the roller coasters in Disneyland.

Was there a lot of violence where you used to live?

No. Back then you could leave your doors open and everything. And unlocked and you never had any problems. Especially in our neighborhood. Everybody watched out for everybody, but there was no, not really any violence that I recall.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Ah, most embarrassing moment is, I really don't know.

Did you ever get picked on in school?

I did, kinda, in my earlier years until I got a little bigger, and then no. 'Cause you know, in your first year of high school, you're considered the "nerd". So yes, I kind of got picked on by the seniors and stuff, but as you started getting older and getting bigger and started fitting in, it got better. But, yes, the first, freshman year was horrible.

You spent all for years at the same high school?

Yes.

What was your best year in school? Was it elementary, high school, college?

I would say, I never went to college, I would say Hayward High. My senior year was the most, the best. We had a lot of fun. You know, 'cause you get all your hard subjects out the first three and then you just take a bunch of easy electives your last year. And you kind of breeze through it, 'cause you already did all the hard stuff.

Did you ever get any "f's" in school?

Yeah, when I didn't do my homework. But as I, I graduated nothing big, but a "C" average. I graduated. It's nothing to be proud of, but I do have a high school diploma. But today, in today's day and age, that's nothing.

What was your most nervous moment?

Getting in front of, uh, I'll never forget this. My freshman year in high school our teacher, Mrs. Mcarthy, used to make us do an oral book report every quarter. That was the hardest thing to do. Sit in front of your class and have all these eyes looking at you. It's nervous. And I don't like that at all, but if you didn't do it you would flunk her class.

What was the hardest choice you had to make growing up?

What to do with my future. That was always tough. Senior year, you know, in the back of your mind 'cause I didn't plan on going to college because I, I got married when I was 18, or 19. I didn't have to get married, but I fell in love with a girl and I just started working. And I found the job I'm at now, is the one I've been at for 46 years.

How did you propose?

We were at my mother, well my now mother-in-law's house and we were just sitting around out on the patio, right. And I'd been thinking about asking her to marry me for a while. And I just went up to her and said "will you marry me?" And she went and said "well you gotta ask my mother", so I got her mother's permission and the rest was history after that. We were married 41 years before she passed away with cancer 4 years ago.

In high school, like growing up, and since you say you didn't know what to do with your future, did you imagine that what you're doing now is what you'd be doing?

No. I wanted to be a truck driver. You know I had dreams of that and I started kind of looking at different things about it, but I didn't know if I'd ever. I didn't know I'd be doing this job, because a friend of mine hooked me up with this job, but I didn't know if this was going to be what I was going to do.

Did you ever go on a road trip before?

All the time. We always jumped in the car and took off as we got older.

What was your favorite music growing up?

Soul music.

Who was your favorite artist?

Back then it was James Brown. I even went and seen his concert, he was awesome. I loved the Temptations and all that. You know, Motown.

What was the scariest thing you've ever seen?

I seen a buddy of mine get killed on a motorcycle right in front of my eyes. And that was horrible. He went, he went. Friends of us were walking down the street and he went to get a carton of cigarettes and a car ran a red light and sideswiped him on his motorcycle and killed him instantly. That was pretty horrible. That stayed with me for a long time.

Did you have, like, horrible dreams after that?

I wouldn't say horrible dreams, but I thought about it a lot. I don't think I ever dreamed about it, but I thought about it a lot, you know for a couple years.

How old were you when this happened?

Let me see. 21? I mean your life can be taken from you just like that. But you just have to enjoy life the best you can and live it to the fullest because you never know when it's going to be taken from you.

Did you ever think about getting tattoos or anything?

Never. That's not my style. I'm kind of an old-fashioned person, like your dad.

Did you ever do drugs?

No. I used to drink, but I never did drugs. It's not a good thing. Drinkin's not a good thing either, but it was legal.

What's your favorite candy?

Big Hunk.

What's that?

It's like a nougat, a white nougat with nuts in it and stuff. That was one of my favorite candybars. And good old Three Musketeers.

Were you ever involved in a crime? Like not involved, but there?

No.

Have you ever been banned from a store?

No. I've never been banned from anyplace.

Did you ever steal from a store?

Yes. I stole a model, a little model once. I didn't get caught, but my guilt made me not do it again.

What's your favorite motorcycle?

Back then it was a Honda, but now, I don't ride anymore, but I've always wanted to get a Harley.

What about a car?

My favorite cars back when I was growing up and in school was Chevy, but now I'm into Hondas.

Do you have a favorite basketball team?

The Warriors.

What's your favorite sports to watch?

It's a tossup between football and baseball. I love them both.

Did you watch the Super Bowl?

Yeah, that was an awesome game, wasn't it?

Who were you going for?

Well I can't stand New England, 'cause they are the tuck-roll for the Raiders.

Tuck-roll? What does that mean?

Ok like when, when we played that game, and they said Brady was going back to throw. He was not. They fumbled the ball and we didn't like him. And Seattle used to be in our division and we couldn't like them, so I know the 'Niner fans don't like Seattle. They were hecka glad that he lost.

That's all.

You run out of questions?

I have a couple more. Did you like running?

Running? I hated running. I would rather walk fast than run.

Have you ever felt, like, left out. Like when your friends went to go do something and you were, just, left out?

No, they always, we always were a pretty tight bunch. You know, even today it's pretty much uh. I look at it this way. If they had something to do, and it didn't involve me, there had to be a reason. You can't really trip on stuff like that, it would drive you crazy.

What's your favorite animal?

Dogs.

What kind?

I uh, I love Labs 'cause they're really friendly. I can't stand Pit Bulls 'cause I'm afraid of them. And I'm accustomed, I got used to cats because my girlfriend has cats, but I was always a dog person. And I'm fascinated with sharks as well.

What is the first real relationship you ever had, like with another person?

Like, you mean in high school, or in general?

In general, like the first real relationship.

Was Carla, my wife. We went together like a year and a half and then we got married. Like I said, I was with her for a long time. And I've been with Brenda now almost six months. And this is, it's a real relationship. We're talking about getting married some day, so that's how well it's going. When you get our age, you have to. It's not like when you're young and you have a lot of time to make decisions. As you get older you're kind of in a window there.

Did you ever have a argument in your relationship?

Yeah, we've had. We had one argument, but it wasn't really an argument. We were kind of tired, and we just got kind of irritated with each other, so we just kind of argued. I don't even know what it was over, that's how silly it was. But I'm not one to argue. I'm not one to get upset. I just kind of let, just go with the flow anymore. And that took me a long time to get like that, because when you're young, you experience things. You don't really know. But that's one thing you got to remember, kids. You just gotta wake up every day and start your day in a positive mode. And it will go a long way.

What was your biggest dream, like as a kid?

What did I want to do? I would have loved to been a line-backer in football because you can do, you can inflict pain. Legally.

What was your favorite movie?

I wanna say, don't laugh, is Pretty Woman. I'm, I don't know, it's kind of funny. You don't see many men that are into chick-flicks. But that, and I enjoyed, uh, I can't even think of the name of that movie now. It was a Vietnam movie with Charlie Sheen. Can't think of it. But that was a good movie. Oh, and Shawshank Redemption. That's one of my favorites too.

Have you ever been to a baseball or a football game?

Yeah, quite a few times. Go to a lot of Giants games and used to go to a lot of Raiders games, but it's just too crazy now so I kinda don't do that anymore. But we go to Giant games, at least 4 or 5 a year.

Did you watch the World Series with the Giants?

Yeah, every game. That was awesome. What's your guys's favorite baseball team?

A's

Giants

I don't like baseball.

You like football huh.

Uh huh, and basketball.

Who's your favorite basketball team?

Thunder.

Thunder are a good team.

Cavaliers.

Cavaliers? Your guys back huh? Good old LeBron.

You're just dying to ask me some more questions, huh?

No I just can't find the right, the right question.

Did you like waking up. What was like the school time, the time you had to be in school in the morning?

I think it was 8:05, something like that. It was, it was not bad, I mean, 'cause my high school was right across the street. We lived, like here (demonstrating) and the high school was here, so it was, it was pretty simple just to get up. Only bad time it was when we used to close the restaurant, 'cause I wouldn't get home 'til 12 and class starts at 8. So you had to get up and get a shower and get off to school, but it was ok. You adapt.

How many years apart are you from the second oldest of your sibilings?

I'd say 8 years. I'm 64.

Did you like having (unintelligible) sibling?

Yeah I did. It was kind of neat. She was my little sister, so you know, you look out for her. But it was cool to have somebody, you know, to hang out with while were growing up together. Until the other kids started coming along.

When were you born?

1950.

Wow.

Wow.

Were you born like when? Never mind.

My mother's 50.

Is she?

Um, what was your favorite brand of clothes, or did you just

Levis. Back then we had Levi's and uh, you know these shoes, they're called Bates Floaters, they're kind of like a desert boot. And Converse tennis shoes. Those never go out.

And what's your favorite color?

I like blue and, uh, black.

What's your favorite sweet?

Sweet? Chocolate cake.

What's your favorite food?

I'd say Mexican food and then Italian food comes pretty close after that.

In school were there chairs like this, or were there just like, long desks?

No, actually it was an individual desk with a. You had a seat and you lifted up the desk, like that, and it was pretty much. That's how we were in class. Do they still have desks in school, or you guys are in tables and stuff?

Tables.

Do you have nay more questions?

Yeah, I think so. Um, what was your least scariest moment?

My least scariest moment. I really don't know. Least scariest moment, I really don't know. 'Cause least scariest would be, I really don't know.

Where was your favorite place to live?

My favorite place to live was Fremont and now it's Alameda. I really like this little town. It's pretty cool.

Have you been to the places over there, like the

Safeway and stuff? Yeah we've been over there a few times. We frequent Target a lot and we went to the Safeway last Sunday. But we haven't been to In and Out yet, 'cause they're not open. And the, the Habit is supposed to be pretty good too.

Do you like Target?

Yeah.

Do you like going fishing?

I used to. I haven't been fishing in quite a few years. But I like camping.

I like fishing.

I do too. I used to really enjoy it.

Do you have a favorite word that you like to use?

Word? You mean like slang, or any word?

Just any word.

You're gonna laugh, but like we use to, we still say this today, but "what up?" I mean, I'm not trying to be cool, it's just my personality.

Did you guys have any phone out there?

You mean cell phones? Heck no. The only phone we had was the wall phone at the house. There was no phones or anything, no pagers, nothing. So it was pretty boring being a kid in my era.

Do you like going to the Library?

Not my favorite thing. I don't really. I know how to read, and I can read, but I'm not. Give me a sports page, or Sports Illustrated and we can talk, but for me to sit here and talk about a book, no way.

Two more questions. What would be your (unintelligible) if you were selected to be President? Like, what changes would you make?

One I'd want to try and get rid of is eliminate the deficit.

What's that?

That is we, we're overspending and so we really need to control that because somebody's got to pay that money back and to try and do away with racism 'cause that's, that's a horrible thing. We're all, we're all the same here. It doesn't matter what the color of your skin is. Your blood is red, just like the next guy. But it takes a long time, because we have come a long way, but I'm still not happy with the way society is towards, you know, different people.

Do you like to watch, what's it called, NASCAR or something?

NASCAR? No it's not my favorite. I would rather watch a football game, baseball game or golf. Basketball I really like, too. But I usually only watch that in the playoffs. That's when it really exciting, because in the regular season 30 seconds could take an hour, but in the playoffs it's a little better.

Would you rather be in the Navy or the Army?

I'd say Navy because you would travel more.

(unintelligible)

I'm probably the same. It depends on your classification, I think, in any service, any armed service. The higher up you are the more money you're going to make.

Do you still like to swim, after you almost drown?

It took me a long time to even get in a pool. But yes, now I can swim. But I'm still kind of nervous if I can't touch the bottom. But if I swim real quick, and I know there's an area that I can touch, like across the way, then I'll go for it. But it took me a long time. I wouldn't even go in the water for like 5 years after that.

You guys have any more questions? (between interviewers)

Have you ever had so many things in life that you just couldn't deal with?

Well, it depends. I'm pretty much good at sorting things out into priorities. But no, I've never been overwhelmed with five or six or a few things coming at you all at once.

(another person in the room) Any more questions? Ok then wrap it up.

What kind of socks do you like to wear, like ankle?

No I've always wore the full crew socks, the ones that come up, you know, just past your ankle.

Did you ever like, uh, build stuff?

Well, like with wood or what?

With anything, like cars.

No, I never was one on that. We used to, you probably don't know it, and Erector set? It's kind of like Legos, but it wasn't like Legos, that kind of thing.

You like to be in airplanes?

It's not my favorite. I'm not afraid of it, but if I had my choice, I'd rather drive.

Did you lift weights?

A little bit. I played around with that a little bit. I wasn't. I didn't really enjoy it, but I did it.

Did you play, like, on any team in school?

No. like I said I worked a lot.

Alright.

Well thank you.

We appreciate it.

Well I appreciate you asking me the questions. I hope it wasn't too horrible right?

SUE YASCOLTZ

Interviewed by Lizbeth Herrera and Izabella Rios

So what was the hardest goals when you were a child?

Oh, my gosh. When I was a child I think my number one goal was to leave my small town. And I did do that. And I did it by, number one, going to college. And I think that was the best thing I ever did, going to college.

Was that hard?

Um, in a way it wasn't. My parents were very poor. And my mother said "well we won't stand in your way" and I thought "as if she could." They weren't paying for it. Um I had a tuition scholarship which was wonderful. I had a work study job so I was able to work and help pay for my way. And I had loans, but in those days were not as bad as they are now. Because in those days it was right after Sputnik, which was the first satellite that the Russians put up into space. And so Congress got really worried and they put forth something they called the National Defense Education Act. And included in that was grant money, loan money, which I paid back 100%, to encourage people to become teachers. Because at that time, congress felt that, through education, by helping young people to become teachers that was one way to get ahead of other countries, including the Russians, and the space race which. As you know things are very different now. But that's how I got through college, a scholarship, work-study job and loans.

What was your favorite subject in college?

Oh, my gosh, my very two favorite were English and History and I kind of put them together. It was kind of, my major was Humanities Inter-departmental which combined English, History and Psychology. I said it was liberal arts, no preference. I mean it was just. And I loved it. I said I absolutely loved it. I felt I was born at age 18, seriously, going to college.

What was your least favorite?

Um I guess, if I didn't like it, I didn't sign up for it. Because in college it's a little different than in high school where you have a certain classes that you have to take. For instance, my favorite science was Biology. And although I didn't, I mean I did well in physics and chemistry, but I can't say I really loved them. Because they were really difficult. Sciences were hard. And math was, I love math, but it took me twice as long to get through math as most people I guess. And it wasn't intuitive, as they say, then. I really liked math because it's logic, but it took me twice as long to, kind of, get it. I did take a class in math in college. I got as far as college algebra, calculus was beyond me. But thank god I didn't have to take that if I didn't want to. But yeah, I loved history. I took one class that was totally devoted to the Civil War. The American Civil War. I really loved that. And I also took a lot of classes on Sub-Saharan Africa. I really, I got really interested in that. And so I took a lot of literature in Sub-Saharan Africa. And in those days, it didn't count for my major, but I thought it was interesting. And sometimes I would just look at what books were going to be read for a class and I would decide "oh, I'll take that class, 'cause I like the books they're reading".

And o gosh reading has always been an interest of mine. I said literature, all kinds of literature. Ever since and before.

What was your favorite book to read?

Oh gosh. Oh, I think it changes. Every year. Every, you know I can remember in high school reading *Gone With the Wind*. I stayed up all night reading that. It was just, you know. But I also read *War and Peace*. I mean, I, after about 180 pages I finally got into it. I mean it's a really long book. I was just spellbound. And now, it's, um. I was just so excited to see that a book that I just loved has been made into a movie. And I just found out last week. And then, Sunday night, the woman starring in that movie won a Golden Globe for Best Actress. And that book was called *Still Alice*. And it was about a woman going through, uh, early Alzheimer's, like she's in her 50's. And she's, usually that's something that doesn't, people don't develop it until they're older, maybe in their 80's. And that book was just so wonderful. I really recommend you read *Still Alice*. It's uh as if you're getting in the head of this woman who's developing Alzheimer's. And maybe as a young person this isn't something you worry about, or really even care about, but it's a really good book. And you can go see the movie too.

When you were little, did you play a lot?

You know, I didn't. Um, I grew up on a farm and it seems like, there was always work to be done. Maybe when I was very little, I played with my cousin who lived a half a mile away. But it seemed like there was, whether it was dusting, or working out in the fields, 'cause we had to work in the fields growing up on a farm. Um helping out my mom with the ironing, the dishes, the cleaning, it seems like there was always something to be done. I really didn't play a lot.

And so when I became an adult, I found things to do where I could play. I love going out to tea. I go out with my friends, all of us little old ladies, and we go out to tea. It's like having a tea party, like you might have had when you were a little girl. We really go out to tea and I'm always planning one of those.

And I like to travel. Again that's kind of like playing for me. Meeting people and different cultures and new things. I really enjoy that.

Is there anything that you liked to do on the farm?

That I liked to do on the farm? Well I guess, when I was very little we had almost every animal. We had horses and pigs and cows and chickens and cats and dogs. And as I got older we sold the horses 'cause we had tractors to do the work that the horses did. And we sold the pigs and no longer raised pigs. Although my uncle still had pigs, and he had goats. I had a pet goat when I was little. But eventually, then we sold all the cows and strictly raised crops. It was a very small farm, it was only 80 acres. And you can't really make a living off that, but my dad loved it. And I guess I loved the animals, I just didn't like the work that went with the farm. Again that's one reason to escape to college. I never wanted to work on a farm again.

I'm still, I mean I'm not interested in gardening. I like seeing the results of gardening, but I don't want to get down and do the work that goes with that. It's interesting how some of those little things from your childhood can affect where your life goes. I loved the animals. I loved the dogs and cats. I had a pet goat. We had pet cows, it was uh. That was the nicest part, was the animals.

What was your favorite animal?

It's difficult to say because I, I love dogs and I love cats. And cats are probably my favorite because they're so independent. You can't tell a cat what to do. Dogs are so sweet. They want you, they want to please you and they love you. But cats, not always. They're very independent and I like them for that.

When you were with the animals, did you ever collect some of the things they made?

Um,

Like milk or eggs?

Oh did I go out and collect the eggs? I might have occasionally. It wasn't exactly my job to do that with the chickens. I think my mom did that. I don't know if she didn't trust me or what. Sometimes there'd be a hen who would be sitting on her eggs. Birds like to sit on the eggs that they've laid, so it was like, you're afraid to get your hand under there and try and get some of those eggs that she's laying.

And my father and my brother probably did more of the milking chores of the cows, although my mother probably did some too. And I would try and make sure that my cats got some of the milk, you know whatever little, give the kitties a little bit. One time, I was 5 and I didn't know there was a right side to get to a cow. You know you're supposed to approach from the right side. So I went to the cow, and I was going to get some milk for the kitty. Well my mother didn't see me and she petted the cow and wanted to get the cow to move over, so the cow stepped on my foot. And I really thought I had a broken foot. I mean, I don't know if I did or not, um. We weren't much for going to the doctor, because that cost money. And uh, but I remember really hurting, and my mother felt so bad 'cause she'd made the cow move. It was like, it wasn't my mom's fault. It wasn't the cows fault. It was probably my fault 'cause I didn't know which was the right way to come to, to approach a cow. I was just doing it for my kitties. I guess it just goes to show that I really loved my kitties.

Would you like to learn how to, like you know collect eggs and stuff?

Collect what?

Collect the eggs and the milk. Would of

Would I have like to have done that? I guess it wasn't a priority for me. Even as a little girl what I really liked to do most was read. I would rather be reading than doing about anything else. And we didn't have

many books. And we might go to the library about once a year. It was only 10 miles away in town, but it was like, and I don't know why we didn't go that often. But my Uncle John had a subscription to a magazine called the Saturday Evening Post, which I don't think they publish any more. It was really interesting and had stories and articles. And after he would finish them, he would bring them to our house and we would devour them. We would read them. Um everybody in my family liked to read. And my mother did too and maybe that was the example. And still my mother was, you know there's work that has to be done. You don't stop working and take some time off and just enjoy reading something because you like to read. Maybe you do that in bed and mom doesn't know you haven't turned off the light in the bedroom because you I wanted to read.

Was there any books that you would have liked to read back then?

Well I went to a catholic school and they didn't have a very good library in the school. And you weren't allowed to take them home. And they were very, a much lower level than for our grade level so it was really kind of odd. So I really didn't get to read what they call the "classics" that everybody's supposed to read before they get through high school. I think I made a point at one time that I was going to read some of the classics. But if I read, for instance, *Moby Dick*, it was an abridged version. I will have to say that I think it was the nuns who gave my sister a copy of *Little Women* and *Eight Cousins*. And these were by an author Louisa May Alcott. You know how kids are reading *Harry Potter* 7 or 8 times? My granddaughter's doing that right now and she's not 10 yet. I read *Eight Cousins* and *Little Women* at least 7 or 8 times. I loved those stories. I thought that I might grow up to be an author because I was just so interested in those stories. Well, I'm a reader not a writer, so. I really recognized early on that I didn't have the kind of imagination that you might need for writing stories. But I love to read. So those were two books that I, that were in our house and that we did read.

Did you see any movies?

You know when I was five, my dad bought a TV set. It was the first. He sold a cow, and I think it was \$600, which was a lot of money in 1950. And um, he bought a TV set, a black & white TV set for about 5 or 600 dollars. And daddy said, "now that we have a TV we don't need to go to the movies anymore" so I think that I saw two movies between age 5 and when I went to college. And I think that was because we were at my cousins and it was Thanksgiving and it was, like, get the kids out of the house – send them to the movies. And I went to the movies once with my cousin for her birthday. I probably saw four movies in that total time. And so when I went to college it again, ah, I could go to the movies because they were within walking distance and I could go on my own and I could use my own money to pay going to the movies. And um, now I go to the Senior Center, to Mastick, and they have movies for free. Because now they're on, you know, DVD and they show them once a week and so I get to see a lot of movies every year at the Senior Center. So that's great too, I don't have to pay money to go see those.

Did you have any movies you didn't like?

I saw so few, that it was hard to say I didn't like them. One western was the Capture of Cochise that was, I mean, what did I know? It was Michael Ansara, I can remember these things. And we saw, this was my cousin, we went to see the Ten Commandments. And, um, again there were so few movies, there was nothing that I didn't like. I mean now I can see movies that I don't like.

Is there any movies that you thought were interesting, like about exploring?

Well I like documentaries, when I think about movies that are about exploring. Um, but it's got to be something that tells a story. There was a movie that came out last year called *Monuments Men*. Well I saw that movie, but I also saw a documentary that dealt with the same story about paintings being hidden in caves all over Europe by the Nazis. And it was just fascinating to see the documentary and to see the fictional story. That's just interesting to me. And I can't say I liked one better than the other 'cause there are different aspects that I liked of each one. I still like documentaries.

I probably don't like the ones where there are a lot of car chases and a lot of blood. There was one movie that they showed at the Senior Center that was so awful. My friend, after it was over with, my friend turned and looked at me and said "well that was two hours I'll never get back".

So you don't like any scary movies?

On no. Yeah, don't really like scary movies, horror movies that sort of thing. They're, uh. You know Friday the 13th and Freddie, I don't know, Nightmare on Elm Street. I don't even go see those. You know, if somebody's showing them, yeah, I'm not going to watch them.

But you like comedy right?

Yeah, I like comedy. Sometimes what they call, uh, romance type movie. I don't necessarily care for those, 'cause they get kind of boring. They're like a formula, the same old thing. But every once in a while, it's like uh, ok. At least. Especially if it's free, I don't mind going to go see it.

Do you like, like, you like romance movies right?

I said it all depends. I think my favorite are movies that deal with friendship. You know, like ET. Oh, my gosh, I cried. I mean, I'm grown up, but I cried because at the very end it was like, his friend was leaving and who knows they probably wouldn't see each other again. Even though this was an alien and this was a young boy, but it was about friendship.

And the movie last year? I loved Frozen. 'Cause it was not your typical, oh the handsome prince takes her away and they live in a castle, it was about two sisters who loved each other. That just, that's the kind of story that really gets to me. There's that relationship of sisters taking care of each other. And so, my friend who's never seen it, it's like "oh, my gosh", and then of course I have friends who have young grandchildren and they've seen it ten times, like I have.

Why don't you ladies look at the paper and ask some questions from that?

I don't think there's much on there.

Is there anything else you'd wanna share about you?

Gosh. Well, I have one daughter and I have four beautiful grandchildren, whom I dearly love. But they live all the way in Texas. And um, so I go to Texas quite often. Sometimes six times a year, sometimes only three times a year. I can't believe there are grandparents who say that they haven't seen their grandchildren in two years and it's like "Oh, my gosh! You change so much in two years!" So um, I just booked, today I booked a flight. My granddaughter, the youngest one, will be ten at the end of next month, in February. And I just booked a flight to go see her because, I figure, ten! That's very momentous, that's double digits. You know so, so I have to go see her. And my oldest grandchild, my grandson who's 21, he will be graduating from college in May and of course I have to go to Maryland to see him graduate from college because these are so important. So I would say yeah, they're the lights of my life and I do have only one daughter. I can't say I, I love one grandchild more than the other because they're very different and all four of them are very wonderful each in their own way. That's, yeah, that's what's near and dear to my heart, my grandchildren.

Uh newspapers, do you read any of them these days?

Um I really gave up my subscription to the Oakland Tribune because it seems like it would be tossed on the porch with the rubber band and I'd take the rubber band off and it would go into recycling because I didn't have the time to read them so I gave up my subscription. But I broke my ankle last year and for two months I couldn't leave and go away and it was, I was in , my friends had to take care of me, I was at their home for two months. And they got subscription s to both the Oakland Tribune and the San Francisco Chronicle and um, so every morning it was like, wow, I had the luxury since I couldn't go anywhere. My friends husband would make me breakfast, a wonderful healthy breakfast, and he would read the paper and I would read the paper and I would do the crosswords in both papers, I love crossword puzzles. And um, that was what I did until lunchtime. I read the paper and did the crosswords and it was like, because that was the time, I was like, I've never had that kind of time when you had nothing else to do, because I couldn't do anything else. I was in a wheelchair and um, kind of limited in um. It was like, oh and TV wasn't that interesting at that time of the day. So yes, so then I could read the newspaper, but I haven't gotten back in the habit of reading the paper. I'll read the East Bay Express sometimes because that has interesting articles. But that's about it with newspapers. I do, since we have the internet now, I do but you get these little short articles on what's happening, but nothing in depth like in the newspapers.

Do you watch any sports?

Actually. I have to mention my granddaughter who's 15, plays volley ball, so I've gotten to know a little more about volleyball than I used to and my son-in-law used to play professional football so yes, I've gotten interested in football. So there are teams that I dislike and teams that I hate and teams that I love. And my grandson, the oldest one that's graduating from college, had a football scholarship. So yeah, I'm still interested in football.

Do you like the Dallas Cowboys?

No. even though they live in, they live right near Dallas. They live about 15 miles from, well it's not called Cowboy stadium anymore, its AT&T. In fact, some friends, the high school class that graduated the year before my grandson, the parents rented out the stadium for the graduation ceremony, if you can imagine, the Cowboys stadium. But the Cowboys are not a favorite team of mine, at all.

On TV, when you're watching, do you see ads?

You know I really pre-record most of the shows that I watch so I don't. I fast forward through the ads, I don't see too many ads. Occasionally I do. And sometimes there are good ones. Like when I watch the Super Bowl, and I will watch the Super Bowl, those ads are so clever, of course I have to watch those. Especially the one about the horse and the dog who are good friends, I mean, friendship is such a value to me.

On the ads, do you see any children ads, like for selling toys?

Well you know, I don't watch kid's shows as much as I used to. I mean it used to be, especially when my grandkids were watching TV a lot more, they don't watch TV as much as they used to, um it would be like, oh boy, you knew what toy was going to be the favorite thing and that's what they would want for Christmas, whatever was being promoted on TV. But I said, I don't watch as many ads anymore, so it's hard to say.

Um I have a random question. Do you have a favorite um kind of tea?

A kind of what?

A flavor, of tea?

Oh a flavor of tea. Actually, you know Numi Tea that's based in Oakland. It is just the best tea I've ever had because it's so fresh. And they have a special tea that's fermented and aged. And it's called Pu•erh, and the best is Emperor Pu•erh. It's kind of like very strong and flavorful. So I do like that. It's interesting that you asked that question because I do have a favorite tea.

Its cause my family drinks a lot of tea.

Oh really. Well Numi Teas, they're all very, very good. I mean it's just, and um. Of course, that, makes me think about my, my grandmother, because, being from Europe, they drank a lot of tea. And they drank it with milk. So I will probably drink tea with milk more often than just plain tea. Although Chinese tea I like it just plain, but I never put sugar in tea. Just milk. Very British.

Sometimes my family puts, like, honey.

You know my brother loves it with honey and I don't care for honey. We had neighbors that would uh, keep bees, I guess you keep bees, you don't raise them, but whenever we would need honey, we would just take a big old jar and um, go over there and buy it. You know, don't have to go to the grocery store. But my brother, if you didn't put salt on it you put honey in it. That was about the way he eats.

Did you have any tea that, when you tried it, you didn't like it?

Probably a lot. I don't know. There are some teas, that if they're really weak, um and I don't like a lot of green teas, but I do like Jasmine which is a green tea. I like teas that have a lot of flavor. I like chai, which isn't exactly a tea.

Do you like teas, like to help you go to sleep?

Like chamomile? No I don't like chamomile. I'm trying to think what kind of. I don't have anything that helps me go to sleep. I go to sleep. I'd rather try and stay awake. It seems like I'm falling asleep, when I'm trying to watch something on TV.

Do you have any favorite TV shows that you watch?

PBS. Um like I said, I feel so fortunate to be in a day and age when I can record TV shows. Of course I'm watching Downton Abbey, and all the mysteries, Masterpiece everything, and uh I love documentaries,

and Independent Lens, and Point of View and um American Masters, American Experience. I record all of them and watch them when I can. Um, I do watch commercial TV. I can't say what's my favorite of any of that. I watch the Good Wife. And I know there are others, but I just, um, you know the ones that jump out at me more are the ones on PBS.

Um, do you like, you said you like to travel, so um what kind of places did you travel to?

Well when i was in college I went to Mexico twice. It was the summer between my junior and senior years and then after my senior year I also went to Mexico again. And almost 50 years later I haven't been back to Mexico. And part of it might be that there are safety issues with traveling to Mexico now. I've gone to Europe a few times. I love London. I used to say, oh people that go to England just go there because they can speak the language. Well that's a good reason, but um, you know I think so much of American history is based on British history. We study what happed in England before the colonists came over and so there's a lot of British history that's oh, my gosh, here's where Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth are buried. You know from that era, King Henry's daughters. To go to Stratford on Avon and see where Shakespeare used to walk. That's interesting to me.

But I've also been to France you know Paris. I've been to Spain, Portugal. I've only been to Venice in Italy, but my family is from Poland so I've been there twice and um, trying to think where else was interesting to me. Germany. Yeah I went to some world's fairs. I love going to world's fairs, that's another thing that my family would like to do. They're like expos, expositions, where different countries come together and they show you the best things there are about these countries. Again it's like, again it's something I really love to learn about is different cultures, Odifferent countries. Um I really love Africa because it seems that that's so different from what we get to see every day. I haven't been able to get there. I'd love to go to Egypt, but again safety issues prevent me from visiting there. Another place on my bucket list is Greece. I want to go to Greece eventually, I hope.

Um. With your grandchildren did you go to any places like Great America or Disneyland?

Oh yes. Yes. Um, actually I didn't go with them. I took my daughter to Disneyland. I've gone to Disneyland without them, I love Disneyland. My granddaughter was playing in a volleyball tournament at the Wide World of Sports at Disneyworld. And so her whole team was doing a tour of Disneyworld and I went also. It was right after my 65th birthday and I can't walk very much, but at Disneyworld you can rent these little scooters for 50\$ a day and so I just went off on my own. And because it was so close to my 65th birthday, I went to guest services and got a button that said "it's my birthday" and everywhere I went with that button, I highly recommend doing that if it's near your birthday, I was like "oh it's your birthday, come to the head of the line", just all these wonderful things. I was really treated very well because it was my birthday. Well, you know, it was within 7 days of my birthday.

But I had so much fun, even if I was there on my own. My daughter and granddaughter were doing their group thing, although, it was like, in all of Disneyworld, I was supposed to meet up with them eventually and we were going to have dinner together, it was a special dinner just for the team. And I saw them outside some particular thing it was like Sleeping Beauty, no it was Beauty and the Beast. And it was like, oh, my gosh! So I joined up with them. And I wasn't able to get into the Pixar, toy story thing, but they had because of the tour they were on, they got to go to the head of the line there. 'Cause they told me, "oh there are no more tickets to get in for today" and I thought oh well, Pixar, I thought I live right near Pixar, I should to be able to go to this, well anyway so I got to go in with them. So we went to the dinner and then we all went to see Fantasia, the light show, afterwards so that was really fun. So I got to do that with my grandkids, at least 3 of them and that was fun.

One thing I did do with my grandsons when they were very little. We were supposed to take a family trip to the Cayman Islands. This is right near Jamaica right below Cuba. My son-in-laws father was very ill so they cancelled, but my sister and I took my two grandsons who were 3 and 6, took them with us to the Cayman Islands. We had so much fun. It's just you know. They were so young and they were so endearing. Boy those were such good memories. Just really good memories. You know Jalil was six and he's helping do a beach cleanup. It's like oh, very precious.

Is there any places that you'd like to go with your grandchildren?

That I wouldn't like to go?

No.

That I would still like to go? Hawaii. I've been to Hawaii. And actually, I've been to Hawaii with my grandchildren because my daughter and son-in-law took a trip and I came along as the nanny. And then um, I'd love to take my granddaughter to Paris, just because. I think that would be a neat thing to do with my granddaughter.

Um. Where were you born?

Oh I was born in Michigan.

I went to Michigan state university. That was my college.

Was there any different colleges that you would have liked to go to?

That's an interesting question because the answer is No. I knew that I wanted to go to Michigan State University. My sister went to Michigan State and she's four years older than me. I had visited University of Michigan, I went there in coll, in high school. There was something, there was a writer's workshop. Like I said I maybe thought I was going to be a writer, well I wasn't going to be a writer but, um, that was really. There was a special week long workshop, a wonderful experience at University of Michigan. And the teachers at my high school thought well enough of me, it was a hundred dollars and that was a lot of money in 1962 '63, and the teachers paid for half for me to go. And that was just... and I had such an amazing experience.

But I still didn't want to go to University of Michigan because their campus was kind of integrated with the city. And Michigan State was, it's kind of, if you go to Mills College and walk around on their campus and imagine someplace 700 times as big, that's Michigan State. Because it was an agricultural school so they have lots of property and, um, but a very beautiful campus you know, trees and grass. And somebody says it's very beautiful in the wintertime too, but I can only think that it's very cold there. So, uh, but, so that's one reason to move away from Michigan is that it's really, really cold there. Like right now. So I'm glad to be from Michigan, I loved Michigan State, but I left as soon as I graduated, came to California.

Are there any field trips you went on when you were in college or high school?

Um in college I was taking, I don't know why the opportunity came up, we took a field trip to the Detroit Art Institute. Which is probably the one good thing about Detroit. And I know they're having financial problems, they talk about selling some of the paintings that the Art Institute has. I go arghhhh. And that was, I don't know. When I was 18, believe it or not, I loved going to museums. I was just like a sponge for knowledge, I just really wanted to, um, I was just interested in things. And still now, when I go to museums, I don't just sit, ii don't just walk through, I've got to sit and read everything. And of course, now I sit because it's really difficult for me to stand.

And when I was in London, I was staying at a hostel that was right across the street from the new British Library. I had read a book about WWI called, um, I think it was called *Revolution*, which is kind of strange. The author was Pat Barker, that I remember, 'can't remember the title exactly, but it was about a poet called Wilfred Owen who died hours after WWI was declared in armistice. And you think, here's this young man, like 22, cut down in the prime of his life. Well, at the British Library they have a book with his poetry and the changes that he made as he was writing it. And you look at that and you think, "oh my gosh. This man wrote these words and I'm getting to look at it". And of course, it's behind glass.

But, and the other thing that I got, there I was sitting in a wheelchair, because that's how I get around museums, the Magna Carta! If you ever study in history from 1465, about the Magna Carta, this is what the Lords made King John sign. And it's kind of like what our Constitution is based on. And the Magna Carta is right there in front of me in a glass case. And I sitting looking at it and I'm so tired I'm falling asleep, because I'm taking pain medication, but it's like. To me, it's a real thrill for me and I think, boy what a crazy woman, she's really thrilled to see the Magna Carta. I said that is what I just love.

And I love going to London because they have wonderful gardens. I don't have to plant the gardens and work in the gardens but I really love the flowers.

Like, in the museum, is there, like, oh never mind. Did you visit any other places, like in middle school?

Well I went to Catholic school, and so that was for 1st thru 8th grade. I did go to public school for Kindergarten. Believe it or not, our little school which probably had 30 students in the whole school, 'cause it was one of those traditional one-room schoolhouses, one teacher for, you know, all grades. We went on a field trip that went to the state capital and we went to Battle Creek, Michigan which is where they made Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Battle Creek is the home of Kelloggs. And we also went to a bird area, aviary, that was in Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo is near Battle Creek in southern Michigan. When you're from Michigan, you hold up your hand and this is the map of Michigan, you know. So. I grew up in Bay City over here (pointing to her hand), but the capital's at Lansing and down here's Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. They had a wax paper factory in Kalamazoo. So that was, and I can't believe we did it in one day. But I remember the bus trip, 'cause as I said I was a little teeny girl. I was 5 years old, maybe, yeah I wasn't 6 yet and I was falling asleep in my mother's arms. Wow, that was quite a field trip for a one-room schoolhouse, I think. Catholic school we didn't really do too much of that thing.

Oh and when I was in high school I was President of the Science Club, so guess what I did? Probably with the help of my teachers, I'm sure. But Dow Chemical was 20 miles away, so we went on a field trip of Dow Chemical and had a tour. You know there are wonderful opportunities and places that are willing to let you come and tour, you know factories and places where things are made.

And we also went to Greenfield Village which is in Dearborn, Michigan. And if you've never heard of Greenfield Village, Dearborn's where Henry Ford started the first assembly line, made Ford cars. Well with all his money, Ford was really fascinated with inventions, shall we say. In Greenfield Village he has a replica of Independence Hall in Philadelphia and he has filled it full of what I would call "junk". It's like, he's got typewriters, every old typewriter that he could probably collect. And he was a good friend of Thomas Edison so he took Edison's laboratory and brought it to Michigan and had it rebuilt. And then he took a little cottage from early Virginia, the early settlers, the 1600's, and he had that taken apart and brought to Greenfield Village and, um, oh I'm trying to think, Robert Frost, the poet. He had Robert Frost's house brought to Greenfield Village. So you could go through Greenfield Village and visit all these places. So our science club did that too and I think "yeah, I did that".

Did you like to do science, like, um?

I said Biology. I loved Biology. That was the one science. And part of Biology is, um, you know, I remember studying mitosis and meiosis and I cannot go into great descriptions of that, but it's about cell replication. So the one part and the one part of Biology that I really loved and that's classifications. And it's also Anthropology. I love anthropology. I didn't know I loved Anthro until I left Michigan State. I never took a class in it because I thought, "oh it's so hard." People told me it was hard. Well I came to California and I started taking classes, for fun, at Laney and College of Alameda and Merritt. And they were sociology and Anthro and guess what, ii got straight a's. 'Cause I loved it! And Physical Anthro is like Biology. I wrote some of the best papers I ever wrote at Laney College. And I wish that I had had a computer terminal so that I could re-write, 'because re-writing when you've got a typewriter and you say, oh this sentence should really go up here, means you have to re-type the whole page.

Um, did you play with any toys back then?

Well, I had a doll. Oh, my gosh. The one Christmas I got what I really wanted. It was a Susie walker doll, and my name is Sue. I was called Susie when I was little. It was a walking doll and it had, like, this mechanism where if you kind of tilted her, her legs would go forward, you know. I would, it was eight dollars. Which was a lot of money. And I would see an ad in the Saturday Evening Post and I would say, "Look ma, I'm going to ask Santa Clause. I want that doll".

Well we were poor and I really didn't expect that I would get what I asked for. Well Christmas morning, there was this box under the tree. And my name was on it. I mean I first saw that box and I thought oh, it was for my brother. He was the oldest and he always got all the nice stuff. But it was for me. It was the best Christmas I ever had. And I found out years later that my parents had borrowed the money from my sister, she was 8 or 9 at the time, but she did you know work where she would earn money and she would hold onto that money. My mother borrowed the money from my sister to buy me that doll. And I said to

my sister, do you know I was so happy. That was the best Christmas I ever had 'cause I got what I wanted" and I never experienced that again.

You know, because my parents were poor. The next Christmas I got a dress. A cotton dress in the middle of winter. But, um, so it was hard, but hey, some people don't get anything for Christmas so I should be happy to get that. But, also that Christmas I got a doll from my godmother and some other doll, but I never knew about them because my grandmother lived with us. And my grandmother looked and said, "Oh, she's got three dolls and she doesn't need all those." Two of them got sent to Poland. I didn't know that. I didn't miss them, 'cause I had my Susie Walker.

My grandmother was always sending our stuff to Poland because we had. In the 50's they were very, we thought we were poor, they were really poor in Poland. They didn't have enough to eat. And um, to this, well, at least in the 80's, my grandmothers picture was held in a place of high esteem in every house in that little village, where she came from. Because she basically saved the village. It was after WWII, it was under Communism. And my grandmother would send all these packages of our old clothing. And I would help my grandmother fill out all the customs forms, 'cause I could print well. She just, my grandmother did not read or write until after she was married so her writing wasn't that great.

So anyway I had one doll. My cousin Sandy had 9 dolls, but she didn't live with my grandmother so she didn't get hers taken away. And my brother Michael would save up his money and buy, they had farm equipment. Little plows and tractors. And we would take a box and cut out for a door and that was our barn to store all the little toys in. And I played with my brother, playing with these farm implements.

That's enough?

(End of tape)

WILLIAM ROWEN

Interviewed by Teddy Oliver, Jason Glover and Quina Caldwell

What was your funniest moment in your life?

Oh boy, that's a hard question to answer you know because, ok, I'm 69 years old. When you're 69 it's hard to sorta go back over everything that happened to you. Yeah, I should have thought about that before I came in here. Let me see. Really, really funny? Darn it, I can't think of anything. I mean I know I've had some funny stuff happen. Maybe it will come to me. Can we sort of skip that one and go on to the next one?

What was the easiest thing that you passed through in life?

The easiest thing? You know for some reason I'm thinking about, it was sort of like my first job. I was a newspaper reporter. This was a long time ago. I just found that very, very easy. I was able to write stories and people liked the things I was writing. Eventually I got out of it 'cause I just thought it was too easy. I wanted to do something a little more difficult. So I don't know if that's the easiest thing I've ever done, but it was pretty easy.

What is your favorite car?

My favorite color?

Car.

Car. Oh, that's a tough one. I once had a Toyota Camry, and that was a pretty good car. I like the Toyotas a lot. I bought a couple of American cars after that but I didn't like them as much as the Camry.

Did you ever suffer any injuries or repercussions?

Would that include a real, yes I definitely did. I have had come very serious health problems in my life. One of them was when I came down with very serious back problems and this went on for many, many years. And then another time I had a stroke which was a, which was kind of a mild stroke, but it was a stroke. Then the last thing which was 5 years ago, this isn't exactly an injury but it's a very serious illness. I had cancer and I had to have surgery. And I was in the surgery for 5 hours over at UCSF in San Francisco. The surgeon, who was a very wonderful doctor, he had to cut out one of my kidneys 'cause it had cancer. So this is 5 years ago. So now I only have one kidney, but you can live with one kidney, so actually I'm doing pretty good. That was pretty serious, and I was in the hospital for about a month.

What was your favorite thing to ride?

To write?

To ride.

To ride, you mean like a bicycle, or a car, a motorcycle, any of those? Well actually, now, of course I've driven cars my entire life. I got my driver's license when I was 16 years old and I've had it ever since, which is a very long time. But I still remember, before I had my driver's license, um, you could drive a motor scooter if you were 15 ½ and I wanted to get around and I was too young to drive a car, so my dad got me a motor scooter which was a Lambretta and that was a lot of fun. I drove that around for 6 months and then finally started driving. You know what a motor scooter is? And a lot of them are made in Italy 'cause Italy sold Lambrettas mainly.

Did you play any sports in high school, middle school or in college?

No, 'cause, actually, ok. Another health problem that I had. When I was 8 years old I had polio. Ok, you know what polio was? You don't know, they don't teach you that. Yeah, 'cause polio is gone, they um, they have a vaccine for it. You probably got vaccinated for it. 'Cause that's a really serious disease and you can get paralyzed, you can die from it, there's, it's a really horrible disease. But when I was a kid they didn't have a vaccine, so I came down with polio at the age of 8. And I couldn't do sports after that. I mean I could walk around and I look ok and so on, but I had to take a special class for Phys. Ed. because I really couldn't keep up with the other kids when it came to sports, so. But I kinda compensated for that because later when I was writing for newspapers I became a sports writer. So I would go to football games and basketball games and write stories about the games and I got to meet a lot of the guys who were on the teams and the coaches.

Uh?

Yeah?

What was the best, uh, did you have a favorite football player or basketball player that you met?

Oh I met quite a few. 'Cause I was doing my sports writing at UC Berkeley and you know they have a student newspaper at UC Berkeley, it's called the Daily Californian. If you're a student you can write for the Daily Californian and, um, you know this is a very long time ago, so some of these guys, I'm, I'm sure you've never heard of, but there was one athlete, he was a quarterback on the football team, his name was Craig Morton. And you know, so we would go to the football games at UC Berkeley and he'd be on the football field throwing passes and later he played in the NFL 'cause he got drafted as a quarterback. So he's probably the one I remember the most. But I met, um, a lot of athletes at Berkeley and many of them became kind of famous. There was another guy who was a baseball player named Mike Epstein and Mike ended up as the first baseman for the Oakland A's and then in 1972 they won the World Series and Mike was the first baseman on that team. So I definitely remember meeting him. But there were a lot of athletes.

Do you know what team your favorite quarterback went to?

Yea, he, and you can look this up online 'cause he had a pretty big career. He played in the Super Bowl twice for two different teams. He got drafted by the Dallas Cowboys and he played for them for quite a while and took them to the Super Bowl and then they traded him to, I think it was, the Denver Broncos and the same thing, he too. But he lost the Super Bowl both times, but he was the quarterback for both teams.

He retired? Or is he still playing?

Yeah, he retired and then he did a little bit of coaching and uh, he's around. They hired him as some kind of consultant at UC Berkeley. So he's still running around at UC Berkeley. But you know they've had so many great athletes at Cal since he was there, most people don't remember him anymore. I say, "Oh yeah, Craig Morton" and they say, "Oh who was he?" But back in those days if you were following football you knew about him for sure.

If you had one thing to change in the world, what would you change?

Oh boy. That is a tough question; you guys ask some tough questions. Um, you know what I would change is, um. Oh hey they're about to come in. Ok. I'm gonna answer your question. I think they should do a lot more in this country, and also maybe all around the world, a lot more to help people who are poor. Ok yeah, you feel the same way. 'Cause this is a very rich country and there are a lot of people who have tons and tons of money and they're just sitting on it. And um, uh I don't even like to use the word poverty because it just has a thing about it. You know, but um, boy this country has a really serious problem with poverty and we could do something about it if we wanted to. But we haven't and I feel really bad about that. I really do. There's a lot of other very big problems, but that's one of the biggest.

What was your scariest moment in your life?

That was probably when I had my cancer surgery 'cause they didn't know what was going to happen. They really didn't. This was really serious and um, I got, I was really lucky. And I was scared. You can't imagine how scared I was. But um, I knew I had a good surgeon and UCSF is one of the best hospitals in the world and, um, they not only saved my life and they got rid of the cancer, 'cause of course they had to take out my kidney, but I didn't have to. You probably don't know, have you heard about chemotherapy? Do you know what that is?

No

Ok. Um, if you have cancer, after the surgery, usually they've gotta give you chemotherapy which uses these horrible chemicals that make you sick as a dog. People just hate them. And I didn't have to have chemotherapy so I was really, and they didn't know, so I was really lucky. But um that's just one of those things that you don't know what's going to happen to you. But everything worked out just great and here I am talking to you guys.

Um did you.

He's trying to think.

Like what was your best place to eat?

Anywhere in the world or just in Alameda?

Alameda.

It's funny because a friend of mine is being interviewed in another room, her name is Cathy. And Cathy and I we both love this. There's a Cambodian restaurant in Alameda, it's on Park Street. Probably you haven't had any Cambodian food yet, but if you can get somebody to spend a little money on you, you might want to go over there because Cambodian food is, you know that's from southeast Asia, and there's a lot of Cambodian people around and they make the greatest food.

What was the hardest case you had as a lawyer?

OK and I had a lot of hard, but there's one case. There's one case I think about the most though. Which was I was representing immigrants who had been taken into prison. I had this one case where this kid had gotten arrested, he had a green card. You know what a green card is, if you're a legal immigrant they give you what's called a green card. It's very important. You know what that is. You probably might have some friends who have a green card 'cause kids can have green cards too.

But anyway, they had arrested this guy. He had a green card so he was legal, but they caught him with an illegal gun and they were going to take away his green card and ship him back to Mexico. They call that deportation. When they send you out of the country and you can't come back. And they, they, he was in the bay area, but the system is kinda funny. Immigration, they sent him to a prison out in Arizona that was out in the middle of the desert. Very big place. There were a couple of thousand immigrants in this prison. You can kinda imagine, huge place, lots of bars, barbed wire, steel and so forth. And I had to get him out of there.

Um, so I went down to Arizona and they hold a hearing inside the prison. There's a courtroom, there's a judge. And um you know in Arizona, this is in the middle of the summer, it was 115 degrees outside. It is so hot there, you cannot believe it. The prison is air conditioned. But you know, it was like I had to walk. They had this huge parking lot and I had to drive down there and park my car and then I had to walk all the way into the prison and it was just, I had my suit on and I'm carrying all these heavy papers, but I got in there. And we had a hearing that lasted four hours and finally the judge says, "Yeah. I think you're right. It was just an accident. It was somebody else's gun but they found it in his car. It wasn't really his gun. I'm gonna let him out." And, um, I said, "Well, how long's that gonna take?", and he said, "Well, give us about an hour. We gotta, he's gotta get his stuff together and we have to do some papers." And his family was there. They'd all come down from the Bay Area. And they were all going nuts because this was their brother and their son, you know. And I walked out and I said to them "Well the judge is going to let him go" and they just went, "Oh my god, they're going to let him out. You're a hero! You got my brother out" and so I waited with them and about an hour later, he walks out of the prison and he's a free man. So that's a case I always, I hope that wasn't too long.

It says on the paper that you grew up in Los Angeles. Did you used to live there? Where did you used to live?

Well there's a part of L.A. And you know L.A. is a very big city, just like the Bay Area, but it's actually bigger. It's called West L.A., which is the part that's out toward the ocean. It's not too bad. There's a university there you know, it's called UCLA. It's just like UC Berkeley and my father originally came out there to teach at UCLA, so we were living fairly close to the university. It's a pretty nice area. I go down there. You know every now and then when I'm in L.A.; I try to visit all the places where I grew up. But one thing about L.A., they have this thing down there it's called smog. And smog means the air is dirtier than hell and you can't even see. Like you're driving your car on the freeway and you, ok this is pollution, it's caused by the cars and everything. It's a lot better now. But they still have it. And when I was a kid growing up in L.A. I hated the smog. I just hated it. No, I couldn't breathe. I was coughing. I don't have asthma, but if you have asthma and you're growing up in L.A. you're in serious trouble. So anyway, that's what I remember about L.A. is all that. And I got out, I said "I'm leaving. Get me out of here". And a lot of people really like L.A., but I didn't.

What was the best newspaper report you wrote?

The best newspaper report. Gee, why that's a tough one, 'cause I certainly wrote a lot.

Or your favorite.

Or my favorite. Ok, one thing I remember. Ok, I was working on the Daily Cal, and they had just fired the football coach 'cause he couldn't win any games. Well you know that's the way it goes, if you don't win they get rid of you. That's what football's about. So they hired a new coach and my boss on the paper he said, "Well somebody's got to go and talk to this coach and find out what he's like. So Rowen, you go and you interview him." His name was Ray Willsey, I remember him very well. So he's the new football coach, but he just got started. So I made an appointment and I went over to his office and we sat there and we talked for a while. And I really liked him, he was a very nice guy. And then I wrote a story about, well, ok, I met Ray Willsey and he's the new coach and here's what he said. And everybody liked the story. So, yeah, I remember that one.

What high school you went to?

Well it's kind of well-known place. It's called Beverly Hills High School.

Is it probably in the Bay Area or something?

No, no it's in Los Angeles. Yeah, Beverly Hills High School. It's um. Beverly Hills is a small town. It's sort of in the middle of Los Angeles. And um, a lot of movie stars live in Beverly Hills. That's what it's known for. So, um. My parents were not involved with movies, but you know, it's known for the show business people who live there. That's where I went to high school.

So a lot of like famous people, rich people used to go there?

Oh yeah.

So like, on the ground was there like stars on it?

What

You know the ground, like the cement, did it have stars on it that says their name?

Yeah, well that I don't know 'cause that's very hard to get. You've gotta be really, really good. I'm trying to remember what they call that, that's the Hollywood Walk of Fame, something like that. There's hundreds. But yeah it could be, it's very hard to get that. Some of the kids had parents who were working in the movies, and a lot of the times I didn't even know. 'Cause you wouldn't really talk about that very much. Let me get a little water.

Did you ever have a girlfriend?

In high school?

Yeah.

Not really. There were girls I went out with, I didn't have really a steady girlfriend. Is it ok if I just get a little water here?

(to another interviewer) do you have anything? No.

Ok, well so I guess we did it right?

I have one more question.

One more question, ok.

What was your best place to travel?

Best place to travel. Well that would probably be France. Ok, you know where France is. You know it's in Europe. And, one summer, I was in college, but I read a little ad and it said, we can get you a job working in France for the summer. And I thought hey that sounds like a pretty good deal. So I signed up with them. And um, you could either be a summer camp counsellor in France or you could work in a restaurant and I decided I wanted to be a summer camp counsellor. So I went over to France and they, actually you have to have training to be a summer camp counsellor, they're very fussy about this in France. So I went through the training and then they sent me to a French summer camp and I had studied French in Berkeley, so I knew how to speak it a little bit. But it was all strictly French people, nobody spoke any English. It was mainly French kids and then there were other French people and a couple of Americans. And that was really amazing. France is just um, the most incredible country and has really amazing people in it. And I hope, uh, one of these days, if everything works out for you guys, you'll be able to visit it also.

And you know what the big city is in France, right, anybody know?

Is it like, Italy?

No, no Italy is another country. A very famous city. It's the capital of France, it's called Paris. They just had that big murder in Paris, did you hear about that? These terrorists killed the people on a magazine that they didn't like. You didn't hear about it. The magazine was called, has a funny name, it's called *Charlie Hebdo*. And it's in Paris and these terrorists walked in with a bunch of rifles and they shot about 12 people. So the people in Paris are having kind of a hard time right now. But it is a really, it's incredibly beautiful. It's got all kinds of things to see. And of course, the French are. French food is like some of the best you're ever gonna eat. So, yeah, I hope you all get a chance to visit there one of these days.

I have another question. What is the nastiest thing you ever saw?

The nastiest thing, like someone getting beaten up or?

Like somebody's leg falling off or something.

Oh my. That is a tough one. I remember one time I was over in San Francisco and I was on Clement Street and they were taking a dead body out of a building. Somebody had died. And uh, there was this woman and they had her on a stretcher and she was just dead. You know you don't see a dead body very often. But you know in my job as a lawyer, I would have to read, or I would get photographs of dead bodies and uh, people who had been murdered and horrible things had happened to them. And I would have to read all about, 'cause a doctor has to cut up the body and write a report.

Do an autopsy?

Autopsy. Yes. The doctor has a special name. The doctor who does the autopsy is called a pathologist. He's a special doctor. That's all he does. He doesn't help people, he just cuts up dead bodies. And these guys love their job. I don't understand, I mean I couldn't do that. But they do it, all day long all they're doing is cutting up dead bodies and they just think it's great. Yeah, yeah I know, it sounds pretty strange doesn't it?

What's your favorite animal?

Oh, I love cats. I like cats a lot. I like dogs, but I love cats. I don't have one but uh, at least not right now, but I've had cats.

Do you have a favorite color?

Probably green. You like green too.

Did you ever like to watch the Super Bowl?

Oh yeah. I just watched the last one. Did you see that one? That was very unusual wasn't it? Yeah that doesn't happen very often.

Were you very short when you were a kid?

I was, well, when I started growing really fast, and that will probably happen to you guys if it hasn't started already. I think I was growing 2 or 3 inches a year. Bow, it just hits you like, man, it's kind of hard to deal with. You're a little tiny guy one day and then bang, you're 6' tall in about a year later. It's crazy.
(talking between the interviewers)

Did you have a favorite football team or basketball team?

Well, yeah, see I'm an Oakland guy all the way. I mean, you know, to me the Raiders, and uh, you know the Warriors. Of course the Warriors are having this great season right now. But you know last year a lot of people got into the Giants, 'cause the Giants were winning the World Series. Usually I don't pay much attention to the Giants, but.

I think it's kind of weird how the A's win a lot of games, but then they don't make it.

It is weird. It is very weird.

They did a really good job last year, but then didn't make it.

Well you know they traded most of their players and they're starting over with a whole new team practically.

Who's your favorite player?

Let's see. Oh, without a doubt. Without a doubt, and I think he's still there, he's still there, Cocoa Crisp.

Yeah, that's my

You gotta love Cocoa.

(giggling)

No really, no he is.

The name is funny. His name is funny,

His name is funny and he has this batting stance. He holds the bat really differently than all the other players. But boy when you need a hit, he will get you that hit. If there's one player I would want to have up there when they need a hit, it would be Cocoa without a doubt. And he's very fast.

What about the Warriors?

Well, you know, they're doing great right now. You know, Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson and all these people. You guys, do you ever have a chance to go to a Warrior's game?

I used to always go.

It's hard to get the tickets now. Everybody wants to be there now.

(talk between interviewers)

Who do you think is the best shooter in the NBA?

The best shooter? Well it's probably Stephen Curry isn't it? Yeah, cause he's. Who do you think?

I don't know. I think it's Klay Thompson.

Well they're both very good, they're both very good and you've got them both on the same team.

... Kevin Durant.

Who?

Kevin Durant.

Oh yeah, well he's good. He's pretty good. There's a lot of great shooters in the NBA. So do you guys play basketball?

I do

So does your school have a team?

Yes, we have a basketball team... I had an injury, so I couldn't play.

Aw that's too bad. Are you going to come back?

Next season yep.

Alright, you'll get your chance.

We did play the Vipers ...

Now who are the Alameda Vipers?

That's an A team. ...

Alright. So where do you guys play your games?

Oakland, the Jam Town Shell gas station, up there on Alameda Point up by the skate park or like Bladium, we practice there, or Richmond, just travel.

A lot of different places. Yeah. Well you never know, maybe one of these days if I get a chance. So do people come to see you play?

So, a lot of people actually.

Ok. Yeah. Well that might be fun to watch a game. Seriously. So they have a pretty good court at Bladium?

That's just where we practice at.

Uh huh. You don't play your games there. Ok. Well you know I've never been to a game at Alameda High School or Encinal. And I keep thinking one of these days I really should go, 'cause it's right around where I live.

So why don't we sort of wrap this up, can we do that? Ok.

(End of tape)